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CONTROL OVER EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled CONTROL OVER EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS submitted by EUGENE L. EWANYSHYN in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of control over educational decisions in four large, urban school districts in Alberta. Data were collected by means of two forms of a questionnaire during the spring of 1985. The sample included trustees, senior administrators and principals.

The study was largely based on an open systems theory of control as the output or end-result of decision making. Control over educational decisions was defined as the power, authority and influence required to make an actual decision.

Ten categories of decisions were examined by the questionnaires: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) capital expenditures; (3) equipment, supplies and services; (4) curriculum and instruction; (5) personnel management; (6) student management; (7) organizational structure; (8) community relations; (9) implementation of new programs; and (10) policy making and decision making. In addition, the study examined the influence of centralizing and decentralizing factors and the relationship of various background characteristics to perceptions of control.

Data were statistically analyzed by means of Chi-Square, t tests, analysis of variance and the Scheffe' procedure.

The findings indicated that the principal's office, the superintendent's office and the school board were perceived to have major control over most decision categories. The highest overall perceived degree of power, authority and influence over operational decisions was held by the principal's office. Teachers and the provincial education department were perceived to have the least overall control.

In general, the status quo appeared to be acceptable to the respondents regarding three decision categories: curriculum and instruction, organizational structure and new programs. The greatest discrepancies between the perceived actual and preferred degree of control, however, were evident in four decision areas: finance and budgeting, capital expenditures, personnel management and community relations. Of particular interest, economic matters (finance and budgeting, and capital expenditures) were dominant areas of concern.

Overall, the results of this study indicated that there was a very high congruence between the actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions. Apparently, an optimal level of control existed at various organizational levels with respect to most decision categories. In three decision areas (capital expenditures; equipment, supplies and services; and personnel management), trustees and administrators favored greater decentralization of control than was perceived to exist at the time of the study.

Two factors contributed a moderate centralizing influence over educational decisions: education department policy and provincial legislation. In addition, five factors contributed a mild centralizing influence: pressure from the teachers' association, pressure for public accountability, the current political climate, pressure from the trustees' association and the current economic climate. Only one factor, personal philosophy, contributed a mild decentralizing influence over educational decisions.

Two conclusions were drawn from the study:

(1) that perceptions of the locus of control over educational decisions were congruent with the allocation of formal authority as specified by legislation, policies and regulations; and,

(2) that the distribution of control across organizational levels was characteristic of decision making in the school districts studied.

The findings of this study tend to support the view that control over educational decisions is not static but fluid and dynamic, varying across organizational levels and changing from time to time. Most important, this study revealed that a status-quo orientation towards control over educational decisions prevailed in four large, urban school districts in Alberta. Overall, respondents were satisfied with control over educational decisions and preferred few changes.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Writers in educational administration have long recognized the importance of control over educational decisions (Bidwell, 1965; Bridges, 1982; Willower, 1980). Bidwell (1965:1003) suggested that authority and control are a "promising area for research on school organizations in which very little has been done." Almost two decades later, Bridges (1982:19), in taking a different perspective, presented a similar view:

> Power is the only other role-related variable that is studied with any frequency by researchers interested in school administrators. Even so, the frequency is miniscule.

Lament for the lack of research and the call for further study are likely motivated by the search for substantive theories and concepts to describe and to explain adequately the nature of school organizations, including their structures and processes.

In this regard, questions such as the following need to be raised: What are the characteristics of educational organizations? How does educational decision making take place? Who controls educational decisions?

According to Willower (1980:5), school organizations face considerable instability and uncertainty, both of which are counterbalanced by opposing forces:

> A variety of internal and external forces promote instability and uncertainty in school organizations. However, these forces are countered by a wide array of social-organizational structures that reduce uncertainty and respond to norms of rationality.

Willower (1980) added that decision making in certain segments of school organizations may be more adequately explained by the garbage can theory during times of instability and by system-type concepts in times of stability. The garbage can theory suggests that decision making may not be systematic or rational. Yet it may help to explain decision making during times of instability. System-type concepts, which are systematic and rational, may be useful to explain decision making during times of stability.

Taking a somewhat different approach, Firestone and Herriott (1982) pointed out inadequacies in the concept of rational bureaucracy for describing school organizations. They described educational organizations in terms of an anarchy image or loosely coupled system. In contrast to the concept of bureaucracy, the anarchy image describes "organizational settings where goals are ambiguous, hierarchies of authority are not effective mechanisms of integration, technologies are unclear, and participation is fluid" (Firestone & Herriott, 1982:42). To some extent, the anarchy image or loosely coupled system is a useful one, as a frame of reference for viewing educational organizations and explaining how they operate.

Although Allison (1983:23) argued for more direct study of schools proper, he acknowledged:

> One of the most striking characteristics of public schools... is that they are essentially subassemblies of regional schooling systems that are themselves subsystems within state or national schooling structures. Thus, although individual schools may exhibit a relatively high degree of autonomy in certain internal matters, they do not exist or function as fully autonomous organizations in that a number of key elements and processes are controlled and regulated by external authorities.

Allison suggested various organizational levels, including the subsystems of the school unit, the school district level and the provincial level, have a significant degree of control over educational decisions. In terms of level-of-analysis, he suggested "school systems (district-level) or schooling structures (state- or national-level) may constitute more logical analytical units" to "clarify the position of schools within them" (1983:22). This view is supported by Bacharach (1981) and Meyer and Rowan (1983).

In large part, the present study was guided by a wide perspective and multiple level-of-analysis approach as described by Allison and others. As suggested in the literature, the assumption was made that control over educational decisions in the operational sphere is exercised at a number of different organizational levels (Allison, 1983; Bacharach, 1981; Meyer & Rowan, 1983; Scott, 1981). In Alberta, the following are relevant levels: provincial (departmental), school board, superintendent, principal and teacher. Furthermore, the operation of each level of control is largely determined by the formal or legal authority of provincial legislation or regulation.

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main purpose of this study was to determine to what extent control over educational decisions was exercised at each of the five organizational levels. The basic research problem was stated as follows: What are the perceptions of control over educational decisions across various levels? The study was designed to examine four major aspects of the basic problem:

1. What is the perceived degree of actual control over educational decisions, exercised by persons working at various levels of the educational system (provincial, school board, superintendent, principal and teacher)?
2. What is the degree of preferred control over educational decisions at each level?
3. What is the perceived locus of actual and preferred control over educational decisions?
4. What factors contribute to changes in centralization or decentralization of control (locus of control)?

Sub-problems were identified under each aspect of the basic problem.

Perceived Degree of Actual Control over Educational Decisions

1. What is the perceived degree of actual control over educational decisions, exercised at each of the five organizational levels, according to the perceptions of trustees, superintendents and principals?
2. What is the overall perceived degree of actual control over educational decisions, exercised by each one of the five organizational levels?

Degree of Preferred Control over Educational Decisions

3. What is the degree of preferred control over educational decisions, according to the perceptions of trustees, superintendents and principals?
4. What is the overall degree of preferred control over educational decisions at each one of the five organizational levels?

Comparison of the Overall Perceived Degree of Actual and Preferred Control

5. How is the overall perceived degree of actual control over educational decisions related to the overall preferred control at each of the five organizational levels?
6. How are the perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control related across the five organizational levels on various decision items?

Perceived Locus of Actual and Preferred Control

7. What is the perceived locus of actual control over educational decisions?
8. What is the locus of preferred control over educational decisions?
9. How is the perceived locus of actual control related to the locus of preferred control?

Factors Contributing to Changes in the Locus of Control

10. What factors contribute to changes in the perceived locus of control in the educational system?

Relationship of Background Characteristics

11. To what extent do differences exist regarding the perceived actual and preferred control over educational decisions on the basis of the following background characteristics of respondents: (1) gender; (2) age; (3) formal education; (4) position; (5) number of years in a position; (6) years of administrative experience; (7) school district; (8) type of school; and (9) size of school?
12. To what extent do differences exist regarding the perceived influence of various factors on the basis of the following background characteristics of respondents: (1) gender; (2) age; (3) formal education; (4) position; (5) number of years in a position; (6) years of administrative experience; (7) school district; (8) type of school; and (9) size of school?

B. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Historical Context

Historically, under the terms of the BNA Act of 1867 (Section 93), constitutional responsibility for education was allocated to the provinces. The Canada Constitution Act of 1982, furthermore, guaranteed the legal right of provincial control over education. Hence, in Canada the clear separation of powers between the federal and provincial governments on educational matters has meant that the provinces have exercised almost exclusive control over educational decisions. Federal involvement has largely been limited to financial support of specific programs in basic education (language instruction and vocational training), manpower training, and the support of postsecondary institutions. In addition, consultation at the federal level has been fostered through the Council of Ministers.

The extent of control over education in Alberta at the local or school board level has largely been subject to provincial statute or the will of the Minister of Education and the provincial government. In this context, the province not only controls the funding, but largely determines through legislation or regulations to what extent local jurisdictions may share in the governing process over education. Yet local school board jurisdictions do exercise some measure of financial control in establishing a local levy (local supplementary requisition) and carrying out other important responsibilities such as the selection of a superintendent responsible to the board of trustees. At the same time, however, a significant degree of autonomy or discretionary authority is exercised at each level of educational decision making.

Changes in control over educational decisions reflect shifts in the balance of power, authority and influence, which occur from time to time at different positions or levels (Scott, 1981). For instance, the balance of authority, power and influence has been affected by the growth of teacher professionalism during the last several decades, in part the result of higher teacher qualifications. Increasingly, teachers have demanded and gained a larger say in educational matters, particularly on issues directly related to instruction in the classroom

(Bush & Enemark, 1975; Corwin, 1975). Scott (1981:223) acknowledged, for example, that the professional has "considerable discretion over task decisions, in particular, decisions concerning means or techniques." In Alberta, the teachers' professional association, the Alberta Teachers' Association, has become a powerful organization in recent years. It has had considerable influence over education in negotiating directly with the Minister of Education on matters such as the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (1985) and indirectly in advocating educational change and supporting collective bargaining at the local level (Odynak, 1963).

Current Theory and Research

Educational theory and research form a growing body of knowledge about organizations and organizational behavior. They contribute to our understanding of organizational structures, processes and administrative issues. Owens (1981) suggested that the development of theory and research should be ongoing and systematic.

The locus of control over educational decisions is an issue grounded in the literature on educational administration. Tannenbaum (1968:12) acknowledged the importance of control within organizations:

> The assumption of a variable amount of control in organizations represents, we believe, an assumption of basic theoretical and practical importance. Theoretically, this assumption opens up a number of possibilities that would not otherwise be apparent. Consequently it allows us to resolve what might otherwise appear to be opposing and irreconcilable arguments concerning the implications of control in organizations.

Similarly, a variable amount of control may be assumed to exist at different levels within an educational system. For instance, a high degree of centralization of control over educational decisions theoretically allows less opportunity for participation in decision making than does decentralization, but it may be more efficient. On the contrary, a high degree of decentralization of control may allow for a higher degree of participation in educational decision making, but may result in less efficient administrative control (Scott, 1981).

With regard to research, Cheng and McKinley (1983:85) identified three characteristics of useful studies: practical relevance, applicability and specificity; accordingly, research should be "relevant to the concerns of practitioners," "applicable in real-world settings," and related to the specific situation. In addition, research has important political uses, particularly in the areas of policy formulation (Bulmer, 1982; Wirt & Mitchell, 1982) and decision making (Yeakey, 1983). Yet writers such as Bridges (1982:29) acknowledged that educational research has "formidable conceptual, methodological and political obstacles." Willower (1980:2) concurred in suggesting as follows:

> Substantial psychological, operational, and social-organizational constraints make the application of theories by practicing administrators a difficult and problematic undertaking.

Nonetheless, considerable research has been carried out on educational decision making. March (1981) studied control over educational decisions at various organizational levels, while Renihan (1977) and Matthews (1967) investigated control dimensions and decision-making processes, respectively, at the school board level. Chamberlain (1975), Chung (1985), Louden (1980) and Simpkins (1968) examined administrative decision making at the school level, including teacher preferences. At the college level, Barrington (1981) studied the impact of environmental forces, while Day (1971) examined conflict over policy control.

The present study served in part as a follow-up to the March (1981) study, which examined control over educational decisions for the period 1975-85. A comparison of the findings from both studies was possible on selected issues, where similar decision items were used. Also, it was possible to consider the predictions for 1985 made by the respondents in the March study, in light of the findings of the present study, since actual data were gathered during 1985.

C. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Centralization and decentralization of control has been identified as an important issue in the literature (Boyd, 1983; Child, 1973; Dill, 1984; Hage & Aiken, 1969; Mansfield, 1973; March & Miklos, 1983; Mitchell, 1984; Pugh et al, 1969a & b; Reimann, 1973; Ross, 1977; Sousa & Hoy, 1981). Questions such as the following have been raised: Is the system of education highly centralized or decentralized? What is the balance of power, authority and influence which exists among different organizational levels in educational organizations? What should be the balance of power, authority and influence among different organizational levels? These questions are important for general theoretical and practical reasons.

In terms of practice, the present study was justified because many factors, including several government reviews carried out recently or presently underway, may have had a significant impact on control over educational decisions in Alberta. Among these were the following:

1. Review and reorganization of Alberta Education;
2. Secondary Education Review;
3. Review and revision of the School Act.

Furthermore, the implementation of the Management and Finance Plan during 1984 may have contributed very significantly to changes in the locus and degree of control over educational decisions. It represented a major change from past use of numerous equity grants to a new system of block funding. Moreover, other factors such as the current economic recession and contraction, including declining enrolment, may also have had a considerable impact. Lastly, the adoption of specific administrative practices at the local school district level, such as school-based budgeting and staffing, may have resulted in significant changes in control.

On the practical side, an administrator who is aware of the degree of centralization of control over educational decisions may be better able to anticipate to some extent the likely consequences of decisions and, furthermore, gain more adequate support from important stakeholder groups. This view is supported by Thompson (1967:162) who stated that an administrator's judgments are "bound to be significantly influenced by the perceptions or beliefs of those participating in the administrative process."

Today, there is an increasing emphasis on the involvement of public and professional interest groups in the process of educational decision making at various organizational levels. In part, the emphasis has been a result of the pervasive influence of democratic values in society at large (Levin, 1982; Schonberger, 1984). To a large extent also, a greater public awareness and increasing professionalization in society have led to higher expectations for participation in educational decision making (Cox & Wood, 1980; Hoy & Miskel, 1978).

In view of the foregoing, it may be concluded that some potential for conflict may exist at the school level given the possible discrepancies between teacher and principal expectations for participation in decision making.

From a practical perspective, changes in control over educational decisions may have a significant effect on participation in educational decision making. For pragmatic reasons, therefore, it is important for the practicing educational administrator to know about the degree of control over educational decisions being exercised at different organizational levels. Role conflict may arise if there is a wide discrepancy between an individual's perceived and preferred degree of control (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Schein, 1985).

In summary, the study of centralization and decentralization has been a recurring theme in the study of organizational theory and educational administration. Recently, many factors may have had a significant impact on centralization and decentralization of control over educational decisions in Alberta.

D. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Perception refers to the state of mind, attitude or belief which affects behavior and is based on the interpretation of immediate and past experience.

Control over educational decisions refers to the power, authority and influence required to make an actual decision.

A decision refers to the choice of a particular course of action selected from a number of different options.

Formal authority refers to the legal responsibility for making decisions, granted through legislation or regulation.

Power refers to the capacity or potential for exercising control over decisions.

Influence refers to the capacity of one individual to affect the behavior of another.

The locus of control is the position or level where a decision is made.

Centralization of control is the tendency to shift power, authority and influence in decision making to the higher organizational levels.

Decentralization of control is the tendency to shift power, authority and influence in decision making to the lower organizational levels.

School board refers to the board of trustees of a public or separate school district.

Trustee refers to a member of a school board elected according to the terms of the Alberta School Act (1970).

Superintendent refers to the chief executive officer of a school district and any other central office educational administrator at the first and second level, next to the superintendent (assistant superintendent, superintendent of program services, director of curriculum).

E. DELIMITATIONS

This study was delimited to trustees, central office administrators and a random sample of principals from four large, urban school districts in the province of Alberta. Other stakeholder groups such as members of the provincial legislative assembly, provincial education department administrators and classroom teachers were not included in the study. Interest groups such as parents, students, school parent advisory committees, the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Alberta School Trustees' Association also were not included, although they have varying degrees of influence over educational decisions.

Trustees, central office administrators and principals were selected for the study because they are in key positions to identify the locus of control over educational decisions, are knowledgeable and have considerable power and influence to bring about change. Secondly, all three groups hold formal authority and fulfill legal responsibilities in educational decision making.

Furthermore, this study was delimited to four large Alberta school districts largely because of their overall significance to education in Alberta and partly because of the writer's interest. Also, it was considered important to delimit the study to a reasonable number of participants to permit ease of access and data collection. In addition, it was considered important to gather data from more than one group in order to include role partners for the purpose of making comparisons among various groups of educational personnel.

F. LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to the perceptions of three groups having formal authority for control over educational decisions: trustees, central office administrators and principals of four school districts in Alberta. Such a study has limitations because each individual has a unique interpretation of reality. Moreover, an individual's perception of anything is subject to change or distortion on the basis of experience or the addition of new information.

This study was limited to the perceptions of individuals at the time of the study. Of importance, data gathered by means of questionnaires are limited to information which a respondent may recall or have available. Furthermore, questionnaire items or instructions may be misunderstood or misinterpreted by individuals. At best, therefore, such a study represents an approximation of the actual situation which may exist with respect to control over educational decisions.

Nevertheless, it was considered important to study the perceptions of control over educational decisions in the operational sphere, as opposed to strategic policy decisions (e.g., School Act Revision), for the purpose of increasing understanding about a significant research issue, which has both theoretical and practical implications. In this regard, the present study sought only to ascertain respondents' perceptions on items dealing with control over educational decisions as it existed at the time of the study and in terms of what was preferred.

Lastly, since this study was delimited to the urban context in Alberta, the results might well be different in another setting. In this regard, caution should be exercised in interpreting or explaining control over educational decisions in Alberta only on the basis of this study.

G. ASSUMPTIONS

A basic assumption was that control over educational decisions in the operational sphere is exercised at a number of different organizational levels. It was also assumed that data gathered by means of questionnaires were valid and reliable. However, individual perceptions and the reporting of such perceptions may be subject to error. Nevertheless, it was assumed that information provided by the respondents was accurate. Furthermore, it was assumed that respondents had perceptions about control over educational decisions or were prepared to formulate perceptions while completing a questionnaire. Also, the assumption was made that data gathered by means of response scales approximated interval measurement and that no bias was introduced by selecting two stratified samples of equal size.

H. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1 introduced the problem and presented a statement of the purpose of the study. In addition, the basic problem was defined and sub-problems were identified. The chapter also dealt with the significance, definitions and scope of the study. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical and research background to the study while Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology. The results of the study are presented in Chapters 4 through 6. The final chapter presents a summary of the study, conclusions and implications.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical and research background to the problem: What are the perceptions of control over educational decisions?

The main theoretical focus of the study was control over educational decisions, in terms of its location (locus), degree and contributing factors. Thus, the main body of literature on centralization and decentralization of control was reviewed.

As the central concept, control over educational decisions was defined as the power, authority and influence required to make an actual decision. Although the process of decision making was not the main focus of the study, it was considered important to review the concept, including decision-making theories, in order to provide an understanding of important contextual and situational factors related to centralization and decentralization.

First, to provide an appropriate background or context, an organization is defined, largely from the point of view of systems theory. Second, the process of decision making is reviewed, followed by an overview of decision-making theories. Next, major factors contributing to centralization and decentralization of control are examined. Subsequently, the consequences or effects of centralization and decentralization are addressed. Finally, a review of related research is presented, followed by the conceptual framework of the study.

A. ORGANIZATIONS AS SYSTEMS

The Concept of Organization

Most educational decision making is set in an organizational context. In order to understand the process of educational decision making, therefore, it is important to consider the concept of organization, how it may be defined or explained, and its implications for decision making. Etzioni (1964:3): defined organizations succinctly as "social units (or human groupings) deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals." The organization's major characteristics include (Etzioni, 1964:3):

1. divisions of labor, power, and communication responsibilities....
2. the presence of one or more power centres which control the concerted efforts of the organization and direct them toward its goals....
3. substitution of personnel....

Goal specificity, power and control are thus key elements within organizations. Moreover, organizations differ from other social units such as the family, largely in the extent to which they are "consciously planned, deliberately structured and restructured with a membership which is routinely changed" (Etzioni, 1964:3).

Scott (1981) classified definitions of organizations from the perspectives of rational, natural and open systems. He considered Etzioni's definition as an example of a rational systems perspective, along with similar definitions by Barnard (1938), March and Simon (1967) and Blau and Scott (1962). According to a rational systems perspective, Scott (1981:21) defined an organization as a "collectivity oriented to the pursuit of relatively specific goals and exhibiting a relatively high formalized social structure." This definition focuses on both distinctive characteristics and normative structure, particularly on goal specificity and a high degree of formalization, as expressed in explicit rules and procedures. From a natural systems perspective, Scott (1981:22) stated:

> ...an organization is a collectivity whose participants are little affected by the formal structure or official goals but who share a common interest in the survival of the system and who engage in collective activities, informally structured, to secure this end.

The latter definition focuses on organizations as organic systems driven by needs for maintenance and survival in which informal structures play a large part.

From an open systems perspective, Scott (1981:22,23) defined an organization as:

> ...a coalition of shifting interest groups that develop goals by negotiation; the structure of the coalition, its activities, and its outcomes are strongly influenced by environmental factors.

This definition thus places emphasis on the formation of coalitions, bargaining and relationships with the environment. In other words, an organization is "an opportunistic collection of divergent interest groups temporarily banded together" (Scott, 1981:22).

Similarly, from a political systems perspective, an organization may be viewed as follows (Scott 1981:321):

> ...as composed of collections of subgroups of participants who possess various social characteristics, are in different social locations, and exhibit divergent views and interests regarding what the organization is and what it should be doing.

Scott (1981:321) added, "this conception of the organization as a political system can be expanded to include outside constituencies who hold goals for the organization (Thompson, 1967:127), and who attempt to impose these goals on the organization."

In a criticism of systems perspectives, however, Meyer and Rowan (1983:96) stated the following:

> Both closed-systems and open-systems views of organizations tend to see them as encountering the environment at their boundaries. We see the structure of an organization as derived from and legitimated by the environment. In this view, organizations begin to lose their status as internally interdependent systems and come to be seen as dramatic reflections of - dependent subunits within - the wider institutional environment.

The latter view suggests that societal or institutional forces may have considerable impact and may exert much influence or control over an organization. In fact, according to Bacharach (1981:9), "the autonomy of the school district is continually being challenged by various groups in its environment."

Weick (Bacharach, 1981:21) defined an organization as the "existence of an intersubjective reality that results in coordinated action" so that the "coupling that enables coordinated action is a function of the rationality used to conceptualize the organization." Thus, the "concept of a loosely coupled system is epistemologically grounded in an individualistic perspective" (Bacharach, 1981:21), commonly referred to as a phenomenological perspective. From an open systems view, Weick's definition places emphasis on the relationships and experiences of individuals, as opposed to organizational structures and processes.

Scott (1981:321) concluded that no matter how organizations are viewed, "our conceptions of their goals, participants, and constituencies have become progressively more complex," even considering "simple output goals as complex and incorporating multiple facets," in addition to support or maintenance goals.

In summary, all of the foregoing perspectives or definitions have some merit in highlighting various aspects of the concept of organization. Although they do not convey all of the complexities of an organization, they provide useful frames of reference from which to consider implications for decision making.

Implications for decision making. Before considering implications, however, it is useful to examine the question of uncertainty and how organizations may respond to it. In this regard, Thompson (1967:159) proposed that "uncertainty appears as the fundamental problem for complex organizations, and coping with uncertainty, as the essence of the administrative process." He identified three sources of uncertainty, two external and one internal (Thompson, 1967:159):

1. generalized uncertainty, or lack of cause/effect understanding in the culture at large...
2. contingency, in which the outcomes of organizational action are in part determined by the actions of elements of the environment;
3. interdependence of components.

Thompson (1967) argued that under any of the foregoing conditions, organizations respond in predictable ways. For example, he noted that the "monolithic authority network with centralized decision making is not typical of complex organizations in modern societies, for it is appropriate only when closed-system conditions are approximated" (1967:160). He elaborated further on the implications for decision making (1967:160):

> Where boundary contingencies or internal interdependencies are numerous, organizations need bounded rationality for local handling of those uncertainties. Where both internal processes and boundary transactions are highly variable, the bounding of rationality requires structural decentralization, the creation of semiautonomous subsystems.

In this context, Thompson viewed organizational action or decision making largely as a response or adaptation to technological and task-environmental uncertainties. Under specific conditions of uncertainty, therefore, there is a tendency for organizations to emphasize structural decentralization or decentralization of decision making.

In a similar vein, Pfeffer and Salancik (1974:135) argued that "different models of organizations represent different variables relevant to the decision process." They pointed out, for example, that the bureaucratic model suggests a "well-defined authority structure and well-defined objectives for the organization, which tend to result in the use of a computational, optimizing, or more rational type of decision strategy" (1974:135).

In summary, organizational decision making may be described in various ways, depending on whether or not an organization is viewed from systems perspectives or other points of view. At the same time, some perspectives are more appropriate than others for explaining structures and processes in certain kinds of organizations. For instance, as noted earlier, educational organizations generally do not fit the rational systems or bureaucratic model. For this reason, other perspectives are more useful for viewing educational organizations, which have special or unique characteristics.

Characteristics of Educational Organizations

Although educational organizations may be viewed from various systems perspectives, they have special characteristics which need to be taken into account in considering centralization and decentralization of control.

Hasenfeld (1983:9-11) generally described the unique characteristics of human service organizations, such as educational organizations, as follows:

> 1. ...the fact that the "raw material" consists of people vested with moral values affects most of their activities....
> 2. ...the goals of human service organizations are vague, ambiguous, and problematic...
> 3. ...the moral ambiguity surrounding human services also implies that they operate in a turbulent environment....
> 4. ...human service organizations must operate with indeterminate technologies that do not provide complete knowledge about how to attain desired outcomes....
> 5. ...the core activities in human service organizations consist of relations between staff and clients....
> 6. Finally, human service organizations lack reliable and valid measures of effectiveness,

and therefore, may be more resistant to change and innovation. Overall, the latter description suggests that human service organizations are characterized by considerable uncertainty and enormous difficulties, primarily because they deal with the exigencies of human nature, human and social problems.

Similarly, Cohen et al (1972) argued that three characteristics of educational organizations are problematic from the point of view of classical organization theory: the lack of clear and specific goals, an unclear technology and the fluid participation of its members. Viewed as an organized anarchy, an educational organization "can be described better as a loose collection of ideas than as a coherent structure; it discovers preferences through action more than it acts on the basis of preferences" (Cohen et al., 1972:1).

Suggesting a different perspective, Meyer and Rowan (1983:78,79) argued as follows:

> Educational organizations are formed to instruct and socialize. Their specific activity in these two areas, however, seems to be diffusely controlled, in good part outside formal organizational controls. On the other hand, the ritual classifications of schools are precisely specified, closely inspected and tightly controlled.

Similarly, writers such as Bidwell (1965), March and Olsen (1975), Michaelsen (1981), Owens (1981) and Weick (1976) pointed out the structural looseness of educational organizations. For instance, Owens (1981:33) stated that "because so much of educational organization defies explanation by existing rational concepts, the suggestion is that we give serious thought to newer, more unconventional ideas that may lead us to more accurate understanding, such as the notion of loose coupling."

According to Weick (1976:3), loose coupling conveys the "image that coupled events are responsive, but that each event also preserves its own identity and some evidence of its physical or logical separateness." In addition, "loose coupling also carries connotations of impermanence, dissolvability, and tacitness all of which are potentially crucial properties of the glue that holds organizations together" (Weick 1976:3). To illustrate the concept, Weick indicated that loose coupling may exist between a counselor's office and that of the principal.

Recognizing various forms of coupling, Owens (1981:29) defined pooled coupling as the "situation in which organization members share resources in common but otherwise work independently." He elaborated further (1981:29-30):

> The fact that schools are characterized by pooled coupling... means, for example, that there is characteristically low interdependence among the members of educative organizations. Therefore, as long as the facilities and resources remain relatively stable, anyone can be taken out, replaced, or perform poorly with little impact on the functioning of the organization.

The latter view suggests that educational personnel, including teachers, may work fairly independently of one another in the school setting, at least in matters relating to the instructional program or classroom management.

From a political systems perspective, Bacharach (1981:29) suggested school organizations be viewed in the context of three dimensions of decision-making structure: the influence network, goal compatability, and consensus in decision making. The influence network refers to "coalitions of organizational actors and to the interactions between these coalitions in the decision-making process" (Bacharach, 1981:29). In general, goal compatability refers to the degree of congruence among the goals (personal, task and organizational) of various organizational actors, particularly those of key actors (Bacharach, 1981:29). Lastly, identifying power relationships is critical in determining the degree of consensus in decision making.

In summary, educational organizations differ from other types of organizations on a number of important dimensions. Among these are the lack of well-defined goals and objectives, an unclear technology, weak hierarchy of authority and the fluid participation of their members. Overall, the special characteristics of educational organizations are largely problematic and may not be easily explained in terms of both classical or current organizational theory.

In view of their special characteristics, therefore, what are the implications for decision making in educational organizations?

Implications for decision making. One of the important implications relates to the distinction between administrative and professional authority. As Etzioni (1964:76) noted in discussing the work of a professional, the "application of knowledge is basically an individual act, at least in the sense that the individual professional has the ultimate responsibility for his professional decision." He elaborated further (1964:76,77):

> It is this highly individualized principle which is diametrically opposed to the very essence of the organizational principle of control and coordination by superiors - i.e., the principle of administrative authority.... the ultimate justification for a professional act is that it is, to the best of the professional's knowledge, the right to act.... The ultimate justification of an administrative act, however, is that it is in line with the organization's rules and regulations, and that it has been approved - directly or by implication - by a superior rank.

Although a school system may be considered a semi-professional organization (Etzioni, 1964; Hanson, 1981), the potential for conflict or tension between professional and administrative authority is everpresent. Teachers, for example, "view themselves as full-fledged professionals and feel that they should be given more discretion and be less controlled" (Etzioni, 1964:89). As a consequence, "teachers resent the interference of principals and many principals try to minimize it" (Etzioni, 1964:89).

Bidwell (1965:976-77) described the administrative-professional dilemma as follows:

> ...the looseness of system structures and the nature of the teaching task seem to press for a professional mode of school system organization, while demands for uniformity of product and the long time span over which cohorts of students are trained press for rationalization of activities and thus for a bureaucratic base of organization.

According to the foregoing view, therefore, tension exists in school organizations between two opposing forces: professionalism, on one hand, and bureaucracy on the other.

In sharp contrast, Meyer and Rowan (1983:81) argued that "teachers themselves turn out not to believe this myth of professionalism." They said that teachers only "appear to be professionals because they have much discretion within a loosely coupled system" (1983:81). In actual fact, much planning and coordination takes place jointly among teachers and administrators and sometimes parents (Meyer & Rowan 1983:81).

Moreover, Meyer and Rowan (1983) suggested a different view of authority relationships in school systems as put forward in the concept of logic of confidence. They contended (1983:90):

> Interaction in school systems, therefore, is characterized both by the assumption of good faith and the actualities of decoupling. This is the logic of confidence: Parties bring to each other the taken-for-granted, good-faith assumption that the other is, in fact, carrying out his or her defined activity.

A logic of confidence, however, may imply there is indeed a strong desire on the part of teachers and administrators for considerable professional autonomy. For example, Reed and Conners (1982:54) noted:

> ...it seems reasonable to characterize schools as composed of decentralized, semi-autonomous units, where both teachers and students have zones of autonomy that tend to resist bureaucratic-type influences.

Descriptions of the professional and semi-professional bureaucracy by Etzioni (1964), Mintzberg (1979) and Perrow (1967) also tend to support this view.

Further support is offered by Bacharach (1981:28) who suggested as follows:

> In considering school district personnel the primary concern should be with the degree of professionalization and level of specialization of organizational members. It is generally accepted that the more professional the personnel of an organization, the greater the expected autonomy of those personnel and the less susceptible those personnel are to any routinized, bureaucratic expectation.

Many writers, therefore, have contended that professionalism or professional autonomy does exist in school organizations and largely explains organizational behavior in such organizations.

A desire for participation in some areas of decision making, on the part of teachers, also may reflect to some extent their drive for professional autonomy. In this context, Angona and Williams (1981) suggested one implication for decision making: the administrator needs to adopt a dual-orientation and focus on informal techniques in order to gain the loyalty of staff and overcome professional-bureaucratic conflict.

In summary, authority and control may be viewed quite differently in educational organizations, as opposed to non-professional bureaucracies. For this reason, considerable caution should be exercised in applying to educational organizations the concepts and findings of studies regarding organizations other than similar human service organizations.

The context of educational organizations is thus an important variable to consider in explaining control over decision making. Another important factor is the nature of decision making: What is it? How important is it to an organization?

B. PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING

As a process, decision making is a key administrative function within the context of an organization. Barnard (1938:199) made an important distinction between personal and organizational decision making:

> ...there is a technique of decision, an organizational process of thinking which may not be analagous to that of the individual.

Similarly, Simon (1976:37) distinguished between an individual's decision to join and become a member of an organization, as opposed to the decisions an individual makes as a participant within the organization. Both the complexity and importance of organizational decision making were recognized by Simon (1976:291,292):

> Whatever the reasons... organizational decision-making in the organizations of the post-industrial world shows every sign of becoming a great deal more complex than the decision-making of the past. As a consequence of this fact, the decision-making process, rather than the processes contributing immediately and directly to the production of the organization's final output, will bulk larger and larger as the central activity in which the organization is engaged.

Furthermore, in Simon's view (1976:292), the central problem for the organization is "how to organize to make decisions - that is, to process information." The latter is no longer exclusively a human activity since the advent of the computer. In support of Simon, Griffiths (1959:75) also acknowledged that "decision-making is becoming generally recognized as the heart of the organization and the process of administration."

The decision-making process has been described as a series of phases by a number of writers (Cyert & March, 1963; Dill, 1964; Drucker, 1966; Mann, 1976; March & Simon, 1967; Simon, 1976, and Vroom & Yetton, 1973). In general terms, the six phases of rational decision making are the following: identification of the problem, search for possible solutions, evaluation of alternatives, choice of a solution, implementation and feedback.

During the first phase, a problem is identified and described within the context and conditions of its boundaries. In the second or search phase, all possible solutions to the problem are generated, sometimes in conjunction with the evaluation phase. The latter may include a ranking of the consequences of alternative solutions according to the classical model (March & Simon, 1967:138). The fourth phase, choice of a solution, is largely dependent upon the success achieved during the search and evaluation phases. Since some solutions may involve undesirable consequences, compromises, adaptations or concessions may have to be made in making a final choice, according to Drucker (1966:134-136). The implementation phase of a decision is the action phase: a selected course of action is planned and required preparation is carried out. The final or feedback phase involves testing the performance of the solution against pre-determined expectations.

In summary, the process of decision making is central to the organization, highly complex and critically important. Not only are decisions important in themselves, so is the very context of determining how to organize in order to make decisions.

The next section examines various theories which have been proposed to explain organizational decision making.

C. DECISION-MAKING THEORIES

Major theories of decision making include the following: rational-comprehensive theory, theory of bounded or intended rationality, disjointed-incremental theory and mixed scanning (Dunn, 1981; Yeakey, 1983). These serve as useful models for examining organizational decision making. In this section, significant characteristics of the foregoing theories are highlighted and critically assessed.

According to Dunn (1981), the rational-comprehensive theory of decision making deals with decisions which are both rational and comprehensive and meet a number of conditions. The conditions which an individual or collective decision maker must meet are as follows (Dunn 1981:226):

1. identify a policy problem on which there is consensus among all relevant stakeholders.
2. define and consistently rank all goals and objectives whose attainment would represent a resolution of the problem.
3. identify all policy alternatives that may contribute to the attainment of each goal and objective.
4. forecast all consequences that will result from the selection of each alternative.
5. compare each alternative in terms of its consequences for the attainment of each goal and objective.
6. choose that alternative which maximizes the attainment of objectives.

A major criticism of the foregoing theory has been that "actual policy choices seldom conform to the requirements of the rational-comprehensive theory" (Dunn, 1981:226,227). Specifically, the context or conditions in an organizational setting are such that rarely are decisions simultaneously rational and comprehensive. Thus, the major flaw in the rational-comprehensive theory lies in its underlying assumption that choices in an organizational context are both rational and comprehensive.

In sharp contrast, the theory of intended or bounded rationality (Simon, 1976) does not place as much emphasis on rational and comprehensive choice. Simon (1976:79) argued as follows:

> It is impossible for the behavior of a single, isolated individual to reach any high degree of rationality. The number of alternatives he must explore is so great, the information he would need to evaluate them so vast that even an approximation to objective rationality is hard to conceive.

According to the theory of bounded rationality, the decision maker does not attempt to maximize behavior by choosing the optimal solution. Instead, the decision maker chooses a course of action which is "good enough", one which will be "satisfactory" and will "suffice", so as to provide a "satisficing" choice (Simon, 1976:xxviii-xxxi). Thus, bounded rationality does not require that all possible solutions to a problem be considered; rather, reasonable solutions which provide some benefit need only be considered.

Simon's (1976:xxviii) underlying assumption about human behavior is evident in the following statement:

> The central concern of administrative theory is with the boundary between the

> rational and nonrational aspects of human social behavior. Administrative theory is peculiarly the theory of intended and bounded rationality - of the behavior of human beings who satisfice because they have not the wits to maximize.

Although the strength of the theory of bounded rationality is found in its acknowledgement of the limits of rational behavior, the theory is "not an argument for nonrational or irrational behavior" (Dunn 1981:230).

A major weakness, however, of bounded rationality is its lack of emphasis on the search, evaluation and choice phases of decision making. The theory does not place enough attention on finding the best possible solution to a problem. As a result, a decision maker who satisfices, may well be unwittingly inclined to settle for second best by meeting minimum requirements instead of striving for the highest standards.

The notion of rational choice, similar to bounded rationality, is known as constrained maximization (Dunn, 1981:231):

> ...rationality is viewed as the exercise of choice under conditions where the costs and benefits of searching for new alternatives and forecasting their consequences have been taken into account.

Constrained maximization thus possesses some of the advantages of the rational-comprehensive theory, yet avoids its rigidity.

Unlike rational-comprehensive theory, the disjointed-incremental theory suggests that decision makers consider only small or incremental changes in the status quo (Lindblom & Braybrooke, 1963). Furthermore, only a limited number of alternatives need to be generated and problems may be reformulated as new information is gathered. According to disjointed-incremental theory, choices may be amended almost at any time and responsibilities for the evaluation of alternatives may be shared with other groups, even those outside the organization. The theory's major shortcoming is its assumption that the process of decision making is fragmented or disjointed. Paradoxically, its major strengths lie in explaining how decision making may often take place and how the decision maker may give the appearance of flexibility. It presents, however, a highly conservative view, a "status quo orientation", and "suggests that most policy choices will be made by the most powerful interests in society"

(Dunn, 1981:231).

Etzioni (1964) proposed an alternative decision-making theory known as mixed scanning. According to mixed scanning, a distinction is made between strategic choices (basic policy directions) and operational choices. Mixed scanning makes use of a combination of rational-comprehensive and disjointed-incremental theory. If a problem is strategic, emphasis on a rational-comprehensive approach is required. On the other hand, if a problem is operational, a disjointed-incremental approach is necessary. Although it possesses the strengths of both theories, the basic weakness of mixed scanning is a problem of practical application, combining both approaches effectively.

In summary, each of the current decision-making theories falls short of explaining organizational decision making adequately. The following theoretical shortcomings are evident: flaws in basic assumptions, limited explanatory power or weak practical application. In sum, however, current decision-making theories are useful in providing a theoretical framework for assessing and explaining organizational decision making.

D. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION OF CONTROL

In this section, factors contributing to centralization and decentralization of control are discussed. First, however, the concept of control needs some clarification. Next, follows a discussion of a key concept, centralization and decentralization of authority.

Traditionally, control has been defined in terms of power, authority and influence. Unfortunately, such terms have often been used ambiguously. For the purpose of clarification, power is defined as the "ability or capacity to exercise control" or "potential control," while authority refers to the more specific, legal or "formal right to exercise control" (Tannenbaum, 1968:5). In a somewhat broader definition, Scott (1981:277) defined power as a "potential for influence." Kelly (1980:416) noted the distinction between authority and power as follows:

> Authority is legitimate power; power is more than legitimate authority - it has a corona which conceals a core of action.... The balance of power breaks down when overt power is used too freely.

The latter view is supported by Scott (1981:281) who concluded that "authority is legitimate power and that legitimate power is normatively regulated power."

Likewise, Bacharach (1981:33) defined authority as the "official decision-making power that resides in various positions in the organizational system." Moreover, legitimacy is a crucial aspect of authority (Bacharach, 1981:33):

> ... a careful reexamination of the concept of authority reveals an explicit cognitive aspect of Weber's original formulation, for it was Weber (1947:328) who delineated authority as resting on "the belief" in the legitimacy of the action.... Thus theoretically speaking, the structural phenomenon of authority is a consequence of cognitive consensus.

In all, French and Raven (1968) identified five bases of power: legitimate (authority), coercive, expert, reward and referent (charisma).

Influence, on the other hand, may be defined generally as the capacity of one individual to affect the behavior of another. More specifically, Bacharach (1981:34) distinguished between authority and influence as follows:

> Influence is conducted informally, whereas authority is conducted formally. Authority is the power to make the final decision; influence is the power to guide decision makers. Thus the scope of authority is well-defined, the scope of influence is more amorphous.

In summary, influence is the most general concept and encompasses the progressively narrower concepts of power and authority. The present study was guided by the foregoing conception of power, authority and influence, as important dimensions of control.

Centralization and Decentralization of Authority

Centralization and decentralization of authority may be viewed as a structural means of control. For example, classical organization theory balanced division of labor against unity of control (Etzioni, 1964:23). According to this view, tasks are divided or determined by a central authority according to a "central plan of action," guided by administrators in a pyramid of control (chain-of-command) leading to the top executive, who is at the centre of authority (Etzioni, 1964). Moreover, the optimal division of labor and authority may be achieved by following four specialization principles: task purpose, work process, type of clientele and geographical area. However, the foregoing principles of classical theory have been criticized because they often overlap and are prescriptive rather than descriptive (Etzioni 1964:23,24).

According to Pugh et al (1972), six primary dimensions of organizational structure are identified in the literature: specialization, standardization, formalization, centralization, configuration and flexibility. As one dimension of structure, centralization refers to the "locus of authority to make decisions affecting the organization" (Pugh et al, 1972:34). In other words, it is a measure of the degree of authority over decisions at a particular level of the hierarchy. Etzioni (1964:28) explained it as follows:

> The more decision-making authority held by those lower in the authority structure (and larger in number), the less centralized the organization is.

To operationalize the concept of centralization, Pugh et al (1972) determined that authority resides with the last person who gives approval to a decision before legitimate action is taken, even though others may subsequently have to ratify the decision. Furthermore, a measure of the degree of autonomy or decentralization of a particular organizational unit may be determined by counting the number and types of decisions which have to be referred to a higher authority. Thus, a low measure of centralization indicates a high degree of decentralization or autonomy.

On the other hand, Bacharach (1981:34) argued for a distinction between the sources of authority and influence:

> ... much of the debate over whether organizations are centralized or decentralized has been theoretically circumscribed because it is never clear whether organizational theorists are directing their attention to authority or influence. Some organizations may have a highly centralized authority structure but a dispersed influence process. Other organizations may have both a centralized authority structure and a centralized influence process.

In order to determine control over decisions, therefore, it is important to consider not only the distribution of formal decision-making authority but, in addition, the distribution of power and influence.

Research by Tannenbaum et al indicated that the "amount of control or influence is positively associated with position in the formal hierarchy" (Scott 1981:279). Furthermore, "if individuals are asked to describe how much influence is associated with each type of position in the organization, then it is possible to construct a control graph that depicts how centralized or decentralized is the distribution of power in the organization" (Scott, 1981:279).

Hoy and Sousa (1984:321) defined hierarchy of authority as the "extent to which the focus of decision making is prestructured by the formal authority system." Others described authority systems in terms of tightness or closeness of supervision (Blau & Scott, 1962) and tight and loose coupling (Weick, 1976), as noted earlier.

The notion of hierarchy, however, should not be considered an exclusively vertical dimension of structure, as Thompson (1967:59) pointed out:

> It is unfortunate that this term has come to stand almost exclusively for degrees of highness or lowness, for this tends to hide the basic significance of hierarchy for complex organizations. Each level is not simply higher than the one below, but is a more inclusive clustering, or combination of interdependent groups, to handle those aspects of coordination which are beyond the scope of any of its components.

Thompson's view of hierarchy, according to Scott (1981:150), is based on the principle of clustering in which "similar or highly interdependent elements are placed together in such a manner that their interdependence is protected."

In terms of decision making, Blau and Scott (cited in Scott, 1981:150) concluded that:

> ... formal hierarchies aid the performance of tasks requiring the efficient coordination of information and routine decision making whereas they interfere with tasks presenting very complex or ambiguous problems.

Thus, in educational organizations, where tasks are both complex and often ambiguous, it may be argued that less emphasis is placed on the formal hierarchy as a means of organizational control.

For instance, delegation of authority is an important means of decentralization in educational organizations. In a discussion of professionalization and managerial authority, Blau (1974:228) confirmed the relationship between centralization and delegation of authority:

> ... how centralized actual decision making is in the organization depends not only on the degree of centralization in the formal hierarchy but also on other conditions, such as the delegation of responsibilities by superiors to subordinates.

Thus, the extent of delegation of authority needs to be taken into account to determine the locus and degree of control over educational decisions at various organizational levels.

In a case study of organizational control in educational systems, Hanson (1981) noted both formal and informal means of control. He identified five categories of decisions: allocation, security, boundary, evaluation and instructional. Hanson reported that administrators and teachers operated within spheres of influence which included subcoalitions of individuals from both groups. He described the process of decision making as follows (1981:271):

> Specific decisions, either by tradition, delegation, or assumption are zones to the administrators' sphere or to the teachers' sphere where action is taken with considerable autonomy. Where the two spheres overlap (the contested zone) informal negotiations take place to work out an acceptable, although temporary, accord.

Most important, some of the subcoalitions are formally organized while others are informally organized and temporary, only evident when particular issues come to the surface.

In summary, the formal hierarchy is only one structural measure or indicator of centralization and decentralization of control. Other important variables or dimensions include clustering, delegation of authority and informal structures or coalitions.

Other explanations of centralization and decentralization of control have been put forward by systems theorists, as discussed in the next section.

Systems Theory Definitions of Control

In explaining centralization and decentralization of control, systems theorists focused on process, inputs and outputs, in addition to structure. For example, Von Bertalanffy (1950), an early systems theorist, suggested that control structure needs to be taken into account in examining centralization. In this sense, organizational control is relative to structure. It varies on a continuum from one extreme of high centralization in which the concentration of control is limited to one individual or a few members, as in the case of classical organization theory. At the other extreme, of high decentralization, all members of a peer group ideally have equal control.

In the context of systems theory, Whisler et al (1968) identified three measures of organizational control: individual compensation, perceptions of interpersonal influence and span of control. The foregoing measures are related to the following concepts of control, respectively: system control, perceived interpersonal control and formally defined interpersonal control. According to March and Simon (1967), compensation is the "inducement" while control is the "contribution". The latter may be viewed as the output or outcome of decision making, which was the main focus of the present study. In the view of March and Simon (1967), an organization strives to maintain a balance between inducements and contributions.

System control or "control over system output" is broadly defined as the "totality of resources and procedures constituting the organization" (Whisler et al, 1968:284). Moreover, it is affected to some degree by each individual within an organization (Whisler et al, 1968). The concept of perceived interpersonal control is viewed more narrowly as follows (Whisler et al, 1968:286):

> ...control is defined as a process of interpersonal influence. Control is exerted _by_ members, _on_ members in accomplishment of the organization task.

Span of control, on the other hand, is analogous to the latter, although it refers to the formal control found in the relationship between a superior and a subordinate. Classical organization theory holds that a high subordinate-to-superior ratio is usually an indication of a high degree of decentralization because close supervision is limited in such circumstances (Etzioni, 1964).

Yet the opposite situation, a high ratio of managers, does not necessarily indicate high centralization, as might be expected. For example, Scott (1981:224) pointed out that in professional organizations, as concluded by Blau and others, "higher ratios of managers are needed to handle the larger amount of information that must be communicated upward." As a result, the higher ratios reduce the centralization of decision making" (Scott 1981:224). Furthermore, Scott (1981:224) suggested:

> ...the terms manager and span of control are misleading in this context because the managers are themselves professionals and the proportional increase in their numbers signifies not increased closeness of supervision but an attempt to improve the transmission of information and the decision-making capacity of the organization.

Another view of control also focuses on process. Tannenbaum (1968:5) provided a general behavioral definition of control as "any process in which a person or group of persons or organization of persons determines, that is, intentionally affects, the behavior of another person, group, or organization." Furthermore, Tannenbaum (1968:3) presented a broad but useful perspective, which takes into account dimensions external to the organization:

> Control is an inevitable correlate of organization. But it is more than this.... It is related, not only to what goes on within the organization, but also to what the organization does in its external relations. It touches on the questions of democracy and autocracy, centralization and decentralization, "flat" and "tall" organizational structures, workers' councils and joint management.

The notion of control thus raises a serious dilemma for the individual who faces opportunities and choice, on one hand, and conformity and limitations to organizational or social control on the other (Tannenbaum, 1968).

According to systems theorists, an index of centralization and decentralization may be viewed as a structural measure of inequality in the distribution of individual compensation (Whisler et al, 1968:287,288). Similarly, structural measures of perceived amounts of influence or control are indicated by the measures of inequality in the distribution of individual influence. In the case of span of control, centralization is viewed on a continuum ranging from a highly centralized, one-superior-to-one-subordinate relationship, to a highly decentralized system of one superior for the whole organization (Whisler et al, 1968). System control is thus viewed as the overriding concept encompassing both interpersonal and direct task control.

Still another view of control focuses neither on structure nor process. Instead, Muth (1984:28) provided a useful definition of control as the output or end-result of power:

> The term control is parsimonious and incorporates the common understanding of a completed act of power.... Control, then, designates the result of an act of power - it is the manifest acquiescence of one actor to the power of another.

Muth's view of control thus places emphasis on ends or outcomes of administrative decision making, whereas classical organization theory and systems theory largely focused on structure and process as means of maintaining control.

As noted previously, however, organizations are highly influenced by external or environmental factors. Hall (1977) categorized the latter as general or specific. According to Hall, general environmental factors include the following: political, economic, legal, technological, demographic, ecological and cultural. On the other hand, specific environmental factors include other organizations and individuals. According to Etzioni (1964:28), some specific factors which may influence centralization and decentralization of control are the following: cultural norms, educational qualifications, personality, "amount and type of coordination between units," and the "availability of specialized service units," such as a computer section.

Morgan (1986:159) identified the most important sources of power or means of control as follows:

1. Formal authority;
2. Control of scarce resources;
3. Use of organizational structure, rules and regulations;
4. Control of decision processes;
5. Control of knowledge and information;
6. Control of boundaries;
7. Ability to cope with uncertainty;
8. Control of technology;
9. Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of "informal organization";
10. Control of counterorganizations;

11. Symbolism and the management of meaning;
12. Gender and the management of gender relations;
13. Structural factors that define the stage of action;
14. The power one already has.

These sources of power provide organizational members with a variety of means for enhancing their interests and resolving or perpetuating organizational conflict.

In summary, control in organizations has been defined in a number of different ways. Classical organization theory depicted control prescriptively, largely in structural terms, as the distribution of authority in a hierarchical (vertical) chain-of-command and horizontal span of control (Etzioni, 1964). Systems theorists such as Von Bertalanffy (1950) and Katz and Kahn (1966) focused on process. In a similar vein, other writers defined the control dimension descriptively in behavioral terms (Tannenbaum, 1968; Whisler et al, 1968). Muth (1984), on the other hand, considered control as the output or end-result of power. Moreover, major external or environmental factors which affect centralization and decentralization of control are largely beyond the direct control of an individual or a single organization.

Factors or variables contributing to centralization and decentralization of control over decisions are internal and external forces acting upon control mechanisms within an organization. High centralization and high decentralization of control thus may be viewed as the opposite ends of a continuum. It may be concluded that various organizational levels reflect varying degrees of control over various kinds of decisions. In other words, organizational control is determined by numerous and complex internal and external factors, including situational variables, such as the type and degree of decision responsibility and the characteristics of individuals, such as personality.

E. CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION OF CONTROL

The consequences or effects of centralization and decentralization of control may be considered in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization (Etzioni, 1964). Overall, decentralization reduces the organization's dependence on individual subunits. Thompson (1967:129) stated the relationship as a proposition:

> Decentralization dilutes the power structure by creating more power positions but limiting the organization's dependence on each one.

As a result, one consequence of decentralized decision making or multiple power positions may be the possibility of greater competition among various subunits. For example, in school districts where school-based or decentralized staffing takes place, schools may compete vigorously to attract "good" teachers in order to improve their effectiveness. Similarly, under school-based or decentralized budgeting, schools may compete actively for students, primarily because their overall revenue is based largely on their enrolment.

Decentralization, however, may be achieved at the expense of equity as differences in levels of service may arise among communities. This point was made implicitly by Mitchell (1984:149) who succinctly stated the possible consequences of centralized and decentralized control:

> Analyses of the centralization/decentralization problem have identified a fundamental dilemma in governance. Decentralized control leads to the neglect of minority interests, but centralization produces serious alienation and resistance among school personnel and local leaders leading to reduced effectiveness of both policy mandates and general school operations.

On the basis of a study reported by Barton, Etzioni (1964:29) suggested that "centralized organizations allow for less local experimentation and grant less unit-flexibility, although they are more likely to be able to provide facilities that independent units could not afford, and to enforce labor relations standards, such as tenure, more efficiently." Similarly, in the case of school staffing, it may be that centralized, central-office staffing may be more equitable and efficient than decentralized, school-based staffing. At the same time, school-based staffing may be preferred by principals because it increases their control over staffing. Lastly, a very important outcome of centralization and decentralization of control is its effect on participation in educational decision making, the next topic to be addressed.

Participation in Educational Decision Making

Many writers consider the degree of participation in decision making to be an important indicator of effectiveness in educational organizations (Conway, 1984; Owens, 1981; Steers, 1977). In the context of control, what is the rationale for participation in educational decision making? What is participation? How does it relate to centralization and decentralization of control?

Scott (1981:89) noted that the basic rationale for participation in decision making relates to its positive effect on motivation and commitment. Coch and French (1972:117) suggested that "one clear consequence of shared decision making is increased administrative control." Shared or joint decision making, however, must be perceived to be a meaningful process by participants, if it is to be successful. For instance, teachers are sometimes frustrated if a principal seeks participation from staff members but does not allow them to actually influence the final decision.

Owens (1981:321) defined participation as the "mental and emotional involvement of a person in a group situation that encourages the individual to contribute to group goals and to share responsibility for them." Conway (1984:12) stated Lowin's definition of participative decision making as a "mode of organizational operations wherein decisions, as to activities to be implemented, were arrived at by those who were to execute the decisions." Lowin's definition suggests a high degree of independence or autonomy, on the part of participants. It is notably different from the human relations view which considers participation simply as lower ranks sharing in the "decisions made by higher ranks in particular in matters that affect them directly" (Etzioni, 1964:38). Each of the foregoing prescriptive definitions thus emphasizes different aspects of participation. Owens' definition focuses on involvement while Lowin's definition specifies who makes implementation decisions and the human relations approach stresses cooperation.

According to Owens (1981:312), two major benefits of participative decision making include better decisions and the "growth and development of the organization's participants (for example, greater sharing of goals, improved communication, better-developed group process skills)." Participation, however, may not always be desirable. Teachers, for example, may resent being asked to participate in decisions which are primarily in the realm of administration and possibly of low interest or value to them.

Before participative decision making is adopted, Owens (1981:312,313) suggested three factors should be considered:

1. the need for an explicit decision-making process;
2. the nature of the problem to be solved or the issue to be decided;
3. criteria for including people in the process.

Steers (1977) viewed participation in decision making as a means of decentralizing authority and influence. Similar to Owens, Steers (1977:159) suggested the following benefits of participative decision making: better decisions and increased commitment and satisfaction of members. According to Steers and others, the foregoing benefits are associated with an effective organization.

What degree of participation, however, is desirable? Although that depends on many contextual and situational factors, some guidelines have been proposed. For example, Alutto and Belasco (1972:118) viewed participation along a continuum as follows:

1. decisional deprivation -- actual participation in fewer decisions than desired;
2. decisional equilibrium -- actual participation in as many decisions as desired;
3. decisional saturation -- actual participation in a greater number of decisions than desired.

The foregoing criteria are useful for assessing an actual decision process.

Techniques for participation in decision making may be viewed in terms of centralization and decentralization of control. Bridges (1967:55) suggested three major techniques for participation in decision making:

1. participant-determining -- a consensus is required;
2. parliamentarian -- a majority reaches a decision binding on the group;
3. democratic-centralist -- a group is bound by a decision of the person who has final authority.

On a control continuum, participant-determining may fall under low centralization, parliamentarian under moderate centralization and democratic-centralist under high centralization.

Hoy and Sousa (1984:321) made a useful distinction between participation in decision making and delegation of decision making:

> In joint decision making the participants are involved in the process of making decisions; they share a common effort. Delegation of decision making is the entrusting of authority to others; an administrator assigns specific decisions to others, usually subordinates.

On a control continuum, joint decision making may be considered low centralization. Delegation of decision making, on the other hand, may be considered moderate centralization, if one individual of lower rank is designated to make a decision. On the other hand, delegation might be considered low centralization, if authority to make a decision were delegated to an entire staff, as in the case of Bridges' (1967) participant-determining technique.

In summary, centralization and decentralization of control has important consequences on the extent of participation possible in decision making. Decentralization of control, for example, generally may allow for greater participation while centralization of control may limit opportunities for participation. In choosing a particular decision process, an administrator needs to consider the advantages and disadvantages of adopting a particular decision-making technique, which may include varying degrees of formal or informal participation by various individuals or groups. Overall, participative decision making is an important variable to consider in determining the locus and degree of control over educational decisions.

F. RELATED RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

Research in educational administration has attempted to answer fundamental questions relating to organizational control. What is the degree of control over educational decisions at different organizational levels? To what extent have changes occurred in the degree of centralization or decentralization of control? To what extent do teachers participate in the decision-making process? What are the preferences of teachers for taking part in educational decision making? What are the factors, both internal and external to the organization, which influence the decision-making process?

Tentative answers to some of the foregoing questions were suggested by the findings of recent studies in educational decision making. The March (1981) study is examined in some detail, since it was similar to the present study. The findings of other studies on control in educational organizations are also highlighted.

The March Study

The main purpose of the March (1981) study was to examine the patterns of control over educational decisions at five organizational levels, as perceived by school superintendents in the four western Canadian provinces. The five organizational levels included the following: department of education, school board, superintendent's office, school principal and teacher. The study also examined changes in the patterns of control from 1975 to 1980, respondent predictions for 1985, and factors which influence or affect the degree of control.

The March (1981) study, however, did not use data sources other than superintendents, such as trustees, principals or teachers, to determine the extent of agreement among significant groups involved in educational decision making. In contrast, the present study obtained data from trustees, central office administrators and principals on various aspects of control over educational decisions, with a view to determine the extent of agreement among various groups. As noted earlier, a comparison of the findings was possible between the present study and March's study, on similar decision items.

March (1981) found that control over a majority of decision items was exercised at the following organizational levels: the school board, principal and superintendent's office. Generally, the school board had the highest degree of control over eleven decision items such as finance, school construction, special programs, school closure, transportation, special education and community use of schools. The school board's control, however, over the following matters was very low: curriculum outlines, selection of textbooks and student marks. The principal had the highest degree of control over eleven decision items such as the following: school expenditures, fund raising, student conduct and assessment, scheduling, parent advisory committees and duties of non-teaching staff. The principal had low control over only three decision items: selection of a principal, student transportation and school closure. The superintendent had the highest control over seven items such as the following: selection of teachers and principals, procedures for evaluating instruction, staffing and class sizes. Generally, the superintendent's control over other decision items, mostly administrative, was also high.

March (1981) found that the education department had the highest degree of control over curriculum outlines, selection of textbooks, school building construction and school programs. Teacher control was highest on one matter only, namely, determining final marks in high school subjects. Teacher control was also high over student reporting and assessment and student conduct.

Generally, similar patterns of control existed across the four provinces. The major finding with respect to changes in control related to an anticipated increase in the control of principals and teachers. Some decreases in control were also predicted to occur at the department and school board levels on some decision items.

In examining factors affecting centralization or decentralization, March (1981) found that the political and economic climates contributed toward centralization. He concluded that as a school district increased in size the balance of control seemed to shift from the board to the administration. In larger districts, the principal's control also increased. Rural boards generally had greater control over educational decisions than urban boards. In addition, urban teachers, according to March's findings, had greater control than rural teachers.

Other Studies

The main purpose of Simpkin's study (1968) was to examine the distribution of decision-making authority among the individual teacher, the teachers as a group, and school administrators.

Simpkins considered authority structure as an aspect of the general distribution of power in organizations. Simpkins (1968) found that patterns of role specification and decision-making authority in the school were similar to that of a semi-professional organization. However, a direct relationship between the distribution of decision-making authority in schools and the community socio-economic status was not evident. Also, few differences were noted in the distribution of authority among elementary, junior and senior high schools.

Teachers, however, generally preferred a greater degree of decision making by the teaching staff as a group, on a number of school decision items (Simpkins, 1968). The teacher preferences apparently were similar to those characteristic of professional organizations. Thus, Simpkins concluded that teachers desired a shift in the balance of power within the school. On matters related to school goals, however, teachers did not expect greater authority. Overall, Simpkins reported that teachers desired greater involvement in school decision making.

Control dimensions and decision-making processes at the school board level were examined by Renihan (1977) and Matthews (1967). Renihan found that school boards gave most emphasis, on the operational side, to matters such as school finance, business management and personnel. On the other hand, matters pertaining to curriculum and instruction received much less attention. According to Renihan, board decisions were mainly directed toward routine, monitoring activities. However, he found that boards with greater local fiscal effort tended to be more involved in school-community decisions. In addition, boards with both greater local fiscal effort and larger size tended to focus more attention on curriculum and instruction decisions.

Matthews (1967) found that patterns of interaction in reaching decisions were evident in the two school boards studied. Moreover, differences were noted in the interaction patterns for dealing with routine decisions versus novel or complex decisions. Matthews also found variations in the degree to which board members participated in the decision-making process, largely determined by their role perceptions and the expectations of others. School superintendents played a key role in the policy-making process; furthermore, both the decision-making process and the actual decisions were affected by the relationships existing among the superintendent and board members.

A study by Chamberlain (1975) on teacher participation in decision making was similar to Simpkins' study. Like Simpkins, Chamberlain found that teachers desired greater participation in decision making, a finding which was confirmed by principals. However, there was a wide discrepancy between the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding the degree to which teachers already participated in decision making and the degree to which they desired participation. In addition, teachers and principals did not agree on how teachers ought to be involved in different decision areas.

In a study of administrative decision making, Louden (1980) found that decision making was successful and participative in both elementary and secondary schools. Similar to the Simpkins (1968) and Chamberlain (1975) findings, teachers desired greater participation in decision making. Louden (1980) also found wide discrepancies between principal and teacher perceptions about the process of decision making.

Chung (1985) studied the decision-making authority of teachers in fifteen Alberta schools. He found evidence of teacher autonomy in tasks related to classroom management but hierarchical or administrative control over other school matters. Collegial control was weak on most task areas. Chung also reported that teachers tended to prefer greater individual and collegial control over school matters outside the classroom, particularly administrative decisions affecting their work.

Although decisional deprivation was not evident in the area of classroom management, it was evident in matters outside the classroom. In addition, Chung found a negative relationship between teacher satisfaction with decision involvement and decisional deprivation.

Overall, Chung's findings tend to support the existence of both tight and loose coupling at the school level: loose coupling in matters related to classroom management and tight coupling with respect to other school matters. Moreover, the results generally supported other studies which found that teachers overall desired a shift in the balance of power at the school level.

G. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Campbell and Mazzoni (1976:5) referred to a conceptual framework as a "vantage point from which to view the subject, criteria for judging what information is relevant to its study, and a device for organizing the data that are gathered."

This study was largely based on an open systems theory of organizations. Muth (1984) viewed control as the output or end-result of power, authority and influence. Similarly, in this study control over educational decisions was defined as the power, authority and influence required to make an actual decision.

Locus of Control in Educational Organizations

Figure 2.01 presents an open systems conception of control across various levels of the educational system. Control over educational decisions in Alberta is distributed across five organizational levels: (1) the provincial education department; (2) the school board; (3) the superintendent's office; (4) the principal's office; and (5) teachers. Centralization was defined as the tendency for control to move to the higher organizational levels. Its opposite, decentralization, was defined as the tendency for control to move to the lower organizational levels. For example, educational decisions made largely by the provincial education department represent high centralization, while decisions made largely by teachers represent high decentralization.

Thus a system becomes more decentralized if control over decisions moves in the following direction: province —> district —> school —> classroom (policy maker —> administrator —> practitioner), as noted by March (1981). However, a system becomes more centralized if control over decision making moves in the opposite direction. This study determined perceptions of where certain decisions were made in terms of organizational levels, as one indicator of centralization and decentralization of control.

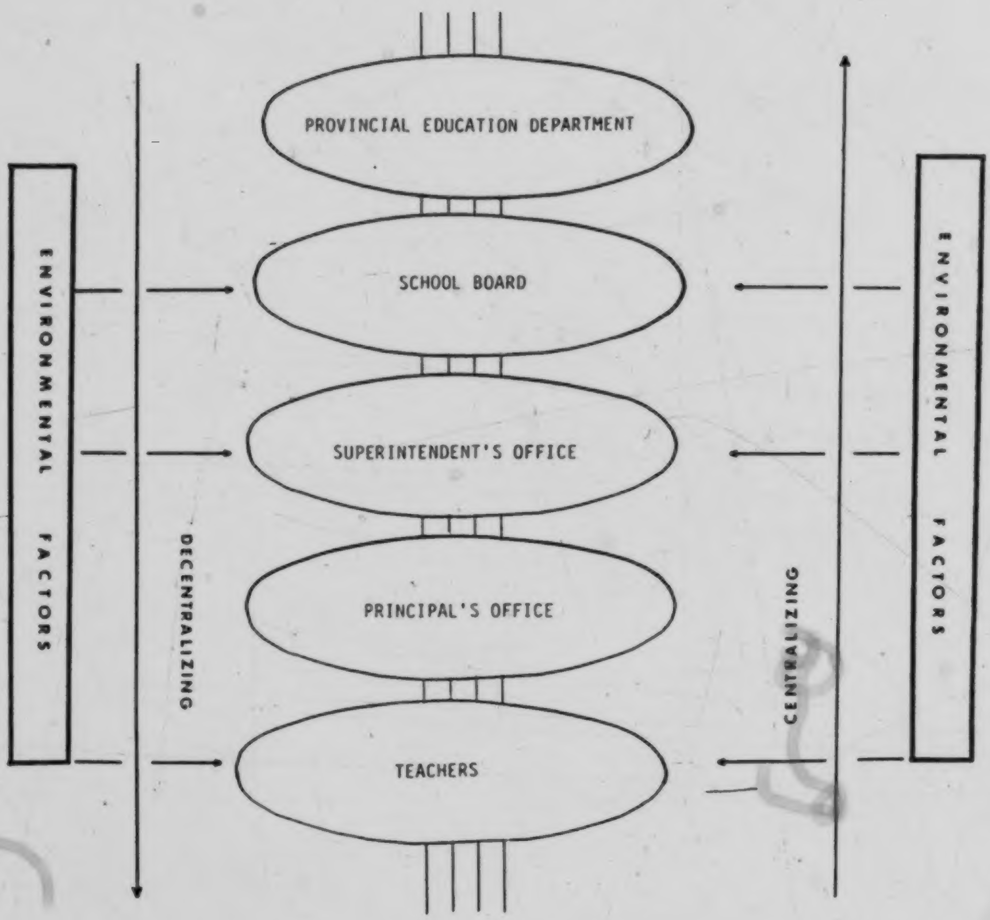
PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
SCHOOL BOARD
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE
PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE
TEACHERS
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS
DECENTRALIZING
CENTRALIZING
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Figure 2.01

Centralization and Decentralization of Control

However, environmental factors also exert control over educational decisions. These include the needs and demands of stakeholder groups, laws, regulations, policies, cultural and social norms. Still, the focal point of this study was the locus of control. The basic research problem was stated as follows: What are the perceptions of control over educational decisions? To answer this question, respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions of control.

Perception

Perception is a key concept for understanding how members within an organization view the locus of control. For the purpose of this study, perception was defined as a state of mind, attitude or belief which affects behavior and is based on the interpretation of immediate and past experience. Although this study did not examine the nature of perception formation, it seemed appropriate to present a conceptual perspective on perception formation. Figure 2.02 illustrates the mechanisms of perception formation (French, Kast and Rosenweig, 1985:14).

According to French et al (1985), information and past experience are key variables or major inputs in perception formation. It is a complex process which involves three interrelated mechanisms: selectivity, interpretation and closure. In addition, factors such as stress, role and reward system affect the formation of perceptions which in turn affect behavior. According to Kelly (1980), the values, attitudes, needs and expectations of the individual are important factors in determining perceptions.

H. SUMMARY

With respect to perceptions of control among various organizational levels, relatively few studies have been carried out in educational administration. However, the research findings of many studies on educational decision making are generally consistent with respect to the desire of teachers for greater control and greater participation. There is lack of agreement, however, between principals and teachers regarding both the kinds of decisions and

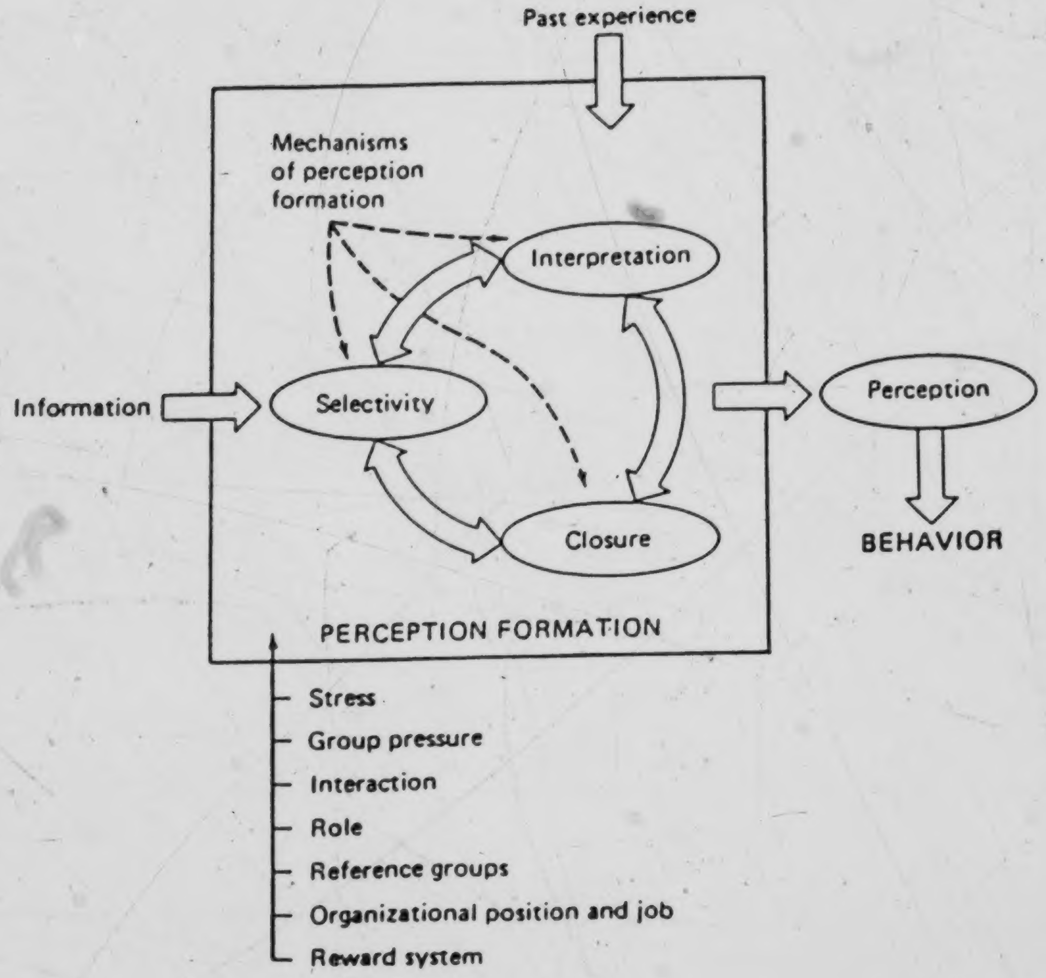
Past experience
Mechanisms
of perception
formation
Interpretation
Information
Selectivity
Closure
Perception
BEHAVIOR
PERCEPTION FORMATION
Stress
Group pressure
Interaction
Role
Reference groups
Organizational position and job
Reward system

Figure 2.02

A Model of Perception Formation

Source: French, Wendell L., Fremont E. Kast and James E. Rosenweig, 1985.

the ways in which teachers might participate in the decision-making process.

Overall, teachers did not have a great deal of control over educational decisions, apart from classroom management, as evident in the findings of March (1981), Simpkins (1968), Chamberlain (1975), Louden (1980) and Chung (1985). Within schools, a great deal of decentralization of control apparently was not evident. Taking a broad perspective, a great deal of decentralization of control over decisions was delegated to the school level, according to some research studies; however, major control over decisions was exercised by principals of schools, not by teachers.

The main conceptualization for this study was the locus of control over educational decisions. In a broad sense, however, the present study determined empirically the extent of control (power, authority and influence) over various decisions which was exercised at multiple organizational levels or positions in the educational system. In part, this study was designed to determine how the total amount of control varied from one school district to another. On this point, Scott (1981:279) noted that "in some organizations none of the positions is perceived as exercising very much influence over others, whereas in other organizations all of the positions are seen to exercise considerable power."

Chapter III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a description of the questionnaire and research procedures developed for the study. The content, validity and reliability of the questionnaire are discussed. Next, the pilot study, carried out prior to data collection, is described. Subsequently, a description of the sample is presented, followed by an outline of the method of analysis of the data.

A. INSTRUMENTATION

Development of Questionnaire

The questionnaire was selected as a technique for gathering data because it offers a number of advantages over other research techniques (Burbach & Becker, 1977; Karges & Bowles, 1979; McCallon & McCray, 1975): objectivity, reasonable cost; comprehensiveness, wide coverage, anonymity, delayed and uniform responses, convenience, and ease of tabulation and analysis. Moreover, the disadvantages of using a questionnaire, such as lack of flexibility and the possibility of a low response rate, were not considered serious in view of the knowledge, experience and educational background of the subjects. Overall, the questionnaire was deemed adequate as a means for gathering data required to answer the basic problem of determining perceptions of control over educational decisions.

A review of similar studies was conducted to determine the kinds and amount of data which might be gathered using a questionnaire (Chamberlain, 1975; Hoy & Sousa, 1984; March, 1981; Simpkins, 1968). Next, a bank of possible questionnaire items, selected mainly from the aforementioned studies, was developed. Subsequently, decision items were carefully selected for the questionnaire on the basis of suggestions from the supervisory committee and the researcher's experience. Altogether, approximately two hundred decision items were reviewed.

Criteria for item selection, deletion or modification included relevance, clarity and conciseness. In addition, an attempt was made to allow for an overall comparison of the decision categories with the March (1981) study, although specific decision items within each category could vary. Final selection and modification of items was carried out following a detailed pilot study.

Ten categories of decisions were included in Part A of the questionnaire, as follows: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) capital expenditures; (3) equipment, supplies and services; (4) curriculum and instruction; (5) personnel management; (6) student management; (7) organizational structure; (8) community relations; (9) implementation of new programs; and (10) policy making and decision making. Four decision items were selected for each category of decision, so that in all forty decision items were listed in the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert-type scale which decision-making group(s) from the five organizational levels (teachers, principal's office, superintendent's office, school board and provincial education department) exercised major control over each decision item. In responding to each item, respondents could select one or more groups from the five levels.

Although categories of decision had been developed prior to data collection, it was considered advisable to present individual decision items in random order in the questionnaire, without the use of sub-headings or categories. Random order was used mainly to minimize the choice of a standard response, on the part of respondents, to items in a particular decision category.

In addition, Part B of the questionnaire examined centralizing and decentralizing factors, as perceived by the total sample of respondents. A careful selection process was used to identify appropriate centralizing and decentralizing factors. The process included a review of the literature and analysis using the following criteria: relevance, clarity and conciseness. Moreover, the suggestions of the supervisory committee and the researcher's experience were also an important part of the process.

Part B of the questionnaire examined the degree of centralization and decentralization influence of sixteen major factors frequently identified in the literature: (1) education department policy; (2) current practices in administration; (3) pressure from the teachers' association (4) provincial legislation; (5) pressure for public accountability; (6) current political climate; (7) pressure from the trustees' association; (8) current economic climate; (9) multiculturalism policy; (10) pressure for minority rights; (11) pressure from science and technology; (12) school board policy; (13) social and cultural mores; (14) personal philosophy; (15) pressure for human rights; and (16) moral and ethical standards.

The degree of influence of each factor was measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strong decentralization to strong centralization. Part B also included two open-ended questions which asked subjects to list other important decentralizing or centralizing factors.

Part C of the questionnaire asked questions about the demographic characteristics of respondents, including gender, age, formal education, position, years in present position, years of administrative experience and, regarding principals, the type and size of school.

Validity

The validity of a questionnaire refers to the issue of whether it actually measures what it purports to measure. Mouly (1978:194) suggested it is "necessary for the questionnaire to have content validity; i.e., each question must be related to the problem under investigation, there must be an adequate coverage of the overall topic, the questions must be clear and unambiguous, etc." The criteria, as suggested by Mouly, were seriously considered in the development of questionnaire items.

Furthermore, to increase internal validity, two forms of a questionnaire were developed: one to deal with the current or actual degree of control over educational decisions (Questionnaire A - Appendix A) and another to examine the preferred degree of control (Questionnaire B - Appendix B). Each group of participants (trustees, central office administrators and principals) was divided so that one-half of each subset completed questionnaire A and the other half completed questionnaire B. Both questionnaires included a single-column Likert-type scale for response items. The two groups of subjects (A and B) were thus selected to comprise two cross-validating samples. It was assumed that no significant differences in characteristics, which might bias the study, would be found in two stratified samples of equal size.

Johnson and Dixon (1984:564) contended, however, that the use of a discrepancy format such as two Likert-type scales, one measuring the "perception of the degree to which the situation actually exists" and the other measuring the "perception of the extent to which the situation is desired to exist," is superior to a single-column Likert-type scale. To some extent, their findings support this view. On the contrary, Cronbach (1958) cautioned against the possible interaction of two separate, dyadic dimensions, such as Likert-type two-column response items dealing with both "what is" and "what ought to be" questions.

In the present study, the single-column Likert-type scale was used primarily for two reasons: first, the sample was considered large enough to form two groups of respondents, each dealing with one of the two questions (is, should be). Thus, it was possible to avoid the "interaction" issue. Second, the single-column Likert-type scale facilitated ease of completion, on the part of respondents.

Reliability

The reliability or consistency of a questionnaire is "difficult to establish" (Mouly, 1978:195). Regarding questionnaire data, Mouly (1978:195,196) argued as follows:

> Split-half reliability, for example, is out of the question because of the relative independence and nonadditivity of the component items.... Actually, establishing reliability may not be that crucial, if we assume that we are indeed dealing with random error.... The reliability of group averages with which we are concerned is invariably greater than that of the individual response and, if n is large, questionnaire reliability should be adequate for the purpose of most studies.

Thus, Mouly (1978:196) concluded that "ensuring validity might be a better investment of one's time and energy." In light of the foregoing, no statistical procedures were used to determine the reliability of the questionnaires developed for the present study. However, a detailed pilot study was designed and conducted to ensure the face validity of the instruments, insofar as possible.

Pilot Study

A pilot study involving trustees, central office administrators and principals, other than subjects involved in the actual study, was conducted. It was carried out to determine the suitability of selected questionnaire items and to determine, according to acceptable measures, the validity and reliability of the instruments. In the pilot study, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire (one-half completed A and the other half B) and an expert-opinion rating form. The latter, developed from a model used by Hurlbert (1973), was used to obtain a rating on an eight-point scale of the clarity and appropriateness of each decision item, including suggestions for changes (Appendix C). Following the pilot study, appropriate changes were made to the questionnaires.

The pilot study provided important feedback about the format and content of the questionnaires. More specifically, it provided useful information about questionnaire items, including instructions, which were somewhat unclear or open to different interpretations. Moreover, suggestions for revision were considered, largely on the basis of the expert-opinion ratings and selected interviews with pilot participants. The time required for the completion of a pilot questionnaire, which participants reported to be about 20 to 35 minutes, was considered satisfactory.

In summary, as a preliminary step, the pilot study contributed to face validity by allowing administrators and trustees to complete a questionnaire and carefully assess its usefulness as a research tool.

B. SAMPLE

Respondents

A sample of 32 trustees, 77 central office administrators and 64 principals was selected. All trustees and central office administrators from the four school districts were included in the study. Stratified random samples of principals were selected for the study on the basis of the type of school (elementary, elementary-junior high, junior high, and senior high). Four principals from each type of school in each school district were selected as participants. The respondents were randomly assigned to two subsets: members of one subset were asked to indicate their perceptions of the current or actual degree of control, while members of the other subset were asked to indicate the preferred degree of control over educational decisions.

The stratified random-sample technique was used to allow for the comparison of findings on the basis of different types of schools (McCallon & McClaran, 1974). It was not considered feasible to include in the study all principals from the four school districts.

Questionnaires were delivered to all trustees and central office administrators at the senior level and selected principals in the four school districts in Calgary and Edmonton. A covering letter, personally addressed to each subject, was enclosed with each questionnaire (Appendix D). Subsequently, a follow-up was conducted by means of a reminder letter (Appendix E) and telephone calls to subjects, who had not returned a questionnaire.

Distribution of Questionnaires

Table 3.01 presents the distribution of 173 subjects selected for the study from four urban school districts. The sample included 32 trustees, 77 central office administrators and 64 principals.

Data were collected during April and May, 1985. Table 3.02 presents the distribution of respondents. In all, 152 questionnaires were returned, representing 88 percent of the sample. The table shows the distribution of the actual returns by number, percentage and school district for each of the three categories of participants. Only usable questionnaires were included.

About a dozen respondents telephoned the writer to make general enquiries about the study or to ask for specific clarification of some matter such as an extension of the return date. In addition, the writer spoke to about 40 subjects in carrying out a telephone follow-up. In a few cases, three or four telephone calls were made to the same individual. Overall, general verbal and written comments made by subjects about the study were very

Table 3.01

Distribution of Questionnaires Sent to Participants by Position

School District	Trustees	Central Office Administrators	Principals	Total
Calgary Public	9	24	16	49
Calgary Separate	7	11	16	34
Edmonton Public	9	27	16	52
Edmonton Separate	7	15	16	38
Total	32	77	64	173

Table 3.02

Distribution of Questionnaires Returned by Position

School District	Trustees		Central Office Administrators		Principals		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Calgary Public	7	78	18	75	13	81	38	78
Calgary Separate	6	86	8	73	16	100	30	88
Edmonton Public	8	89	25	93	15	94	48	92
Edmonton Separate	5	71	15	100	16	100	36	95
Total	26	81	66	86	60	94	152	88

positive; indeed, several respondents requested a copy of the summary of the results, when it becomes available.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 3.03 presents the distribution of demographic characteristics of respondents. Three personal variables were examined, including gender, age and formal education. Organizational variables included position, years in present position, years of administrative experience, school district, type of school and size of school.

There were no significant differences on demographic characteristics between Group A and B respondents on any of the nine variables examined (Table 3.03). Thus, random selection of the two groups proved to be useful. These findings suggest that the two groups of respondents were largely similar and that there was little likelihood that confounding variables (background characteristics) might have biased the study.

Each of the background variables was compared with each of the other variables to determine how the background characteristics might be interrelated. Table 3.04 presents the statistically significant relationships between various demographic characteristics of the total sample as shown by the Chi-square analyses. (Comparisons between statistically significant pairs of demographic characteristics of respondents are presented in Appendix F).

In most cases, background characteristics were unrelated to each other. As indicated in Table 3.04, position was related to three other variables: gender, years in present position, and formal education. Less than 8 percent of the administrative positions examined (central office administrators and principals) were held by females, while almost 54 percent of the trustee positions were occupied by females. Less than 17 percent of the administrators had been in their position for one or two years, while 44 percent of the trustees had held their position for the same length of time. Regarding formal education, less than 23 percent of the administrators had a bachelor's degree or less; however, almost 81 percent of the trustees had a bachelor's degree or less.

Table 3.03

Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Group

Characteristic	Group A		Group B		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Gender						
Female	13	8.6	10	6.6	23	15.1
Male	64	42.1	65	42.8	129	84.9
2. Age						
31-40	10	6.6	5	3.3	15	9.9
41-50	35	23.2	43	28.5	78	51.7
51+	31	20.5	27	17.9	58	38.4
3. Formal Education						
Bach. or less	28	18.5	21	13.9	49	32.5
Mast. or more	49	32.5	53	35.1	102	67.5
4. Position						
Trustee	13	18.6	13	8.6	26	17.1
C.O. Admin.	35	23.0	31	20.4	66	43.4
Principal	29	19.1	31	20.4	60	39.5
5. Years in Position						
1 or 2	15	10.0	17	11.3	32	21.3
3 or 4	23	15.3	16	10.7	39	26.0
5 or 6	19	12.7	19	12.7	38	25.3
7+	19	12.7	22	14.7	41	27.3
6. Years of Administration						
1-13	22	17.5	15	11.9	37	29.4
14-17	18	14.3	15	11.9	33	26.2
18-20	11	8.7	19	15.1	30	23.8
21+	13	10.3	13	10.3	26	20.6

Table 3.03 (Continued)

Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Group

	Group A		Group B		Total	
Characteristic	N	%	N	%	N	%
7. School District						
Calgary Pub.	19	12.5	19	12.5	38	25.0
Calgary Sep.	15	9.9	15	9.9	30	19.7
Edmonton Pub.	25	16.4	23	15.1	48	31.6
Edmonton Sep.	18	11.8	18	11.8	36	23.7
8. Type of School						
Elementary	6	10.0	7	11.7	13	21.7
Elem. Jr. High	8	13.3	8	13.3	16	26.7
Junior High	7	11.7	8	13.3	15	25.0
Senior High	8	13.3	8	13.3	16	26.7
9. Size of School						
up to 200	3	5.0	1	1.7	4	6.7
201-300	4	6.7	5	8.3	9	15.0
301-400	8	13.3	5	8.3	13	21.7
401-500	2	3.3	7	11.7	9	15.0
501-1000	8	13.3	6	10.0	14	23.3
1001-1500	3	5.0	1	1.7	4	6.7
1501-2000	1	1.7	5	8.3	6	10.0
2001+			1	1.7	1	1.7

Table 3.04

Comparison Between Pairs of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Characteristics	Chi-Square	Degrees of Freedom	P
1.	Position and Gender	36.63	2	<0.000
2.	Position and Years in Present Position	19.27	6	< 0.004
3.	Position and Formal Education	33.50	2	< 0.000
4.	Gender and Formal Education	11.59	1	< 0.001
5.	Age and Administrative Experience	60.77	6	< 0.000
6.	Type of School and Size of School	48.03	21	< 0.001

Gender was related to formal education. Males were more highly educated than females. While 35 percent of the females had a master's degree or more, 73 percent of the males had a master's degree or more. Age was positively related to years of administrative experience. As expected, the type of school was related to the size of school. Senior high schools tended to be considerably larger than the three other types of schools.

Analysis of Data

Data indicating the perceived degree of actual and preferred control over educational decisions were analyzed. The distribution of control over various decision items was analyzed by means of an autonomy scale. An autonomy scale was used by Konrad (1976) to measure the distribution of control or authority over decisions in educational organizations. In this study, the autonomy scale was used as a measure of the locus of control in decision making. Mean locus of control scores were analyzed on each of the forty decision items regarding the actual and preferred degree of control.

The effects of background characteristics were examined, including gender, age, formal education, position, number of years in present position, years of administrative experience (administrators), school district, type of school (principals) and size of school.

Tests of significance such as Chi-square, the Scheffe' procedure for pairwise comparison using one-way analysis of variance and standardized t tests (Statistical Procedures for Social Sciences) were carried out.

Chapter IV

DEGREE OF CONTROL OVER EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

This chapter presents the data related to questionnaire responses indicating perceptions of the degree of control over educational decisions which is exercised at five organizational levels. The percentages of responses to forty decision items are presented and discussed.

Respondents indicated whether control over a particular decision item was held or should be held, at one or more of the organizational levels. Each respondent was asked to indicate which group or groups, listed from (1) teachers to (5) provincial education department, exercised or should exercise major control. Control over educational decisions was defined as the power, authority and influence required to make an actual decision.

A description of the procedures used to select the actual decision items was presented in Chapter 3. The forty decision items are presented in succeeding tables, according to categories of decisions.

A. ACTUAL AND PREFERRED DEGREE OF CONTROL

The succeeding analyses address the following sub-problems:

Sub-Problem 1. What is the perceived degree of actual control over educational decisions, exercised at each of the five organizational levels, according to the perceptions of trustees, superintendents and principals?

Sub-Problem 3. What is the degree of preferred control over educational decisions, according to the perceptions of trustees, superintendents and principals?

Comparison of the Perceived Degree of Actual and Preferred Control Within Organizational Levels

Decision items from the questionnaires were arranged to form ten categories: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) capital expenditures; (3) equipment, supplies and services; (4) curriculum and instruction; (5) personnel management; (6) student management; (7) organizational structure; (8) community relations; (9) implementation of new programs; and (10) policy making and decision making.

The responses to each decision item were aggregated within each level to obtain a percentage of the total respondents who identified a specific level. Since respondents could identify the locus of decision making at one or more levels, the percentage of responses across the five levels usually exceeded 100 percent.

Chi-square analyses were carried out within each organizational level on each decision item to determine whether or not differences in the percentages of responses (is, should be) by group were significant. Significant differences are noted in the succeeding data tables, each of which is followed by a discussion of the results. Next, significant differences are presented with respect to Chi-square analyses of the responses across all five organizational levels as a group on each decision item.

Finance and Budgeting

Table 4.01 presents the perceived distribution of the actual and preferred degree of control over finance and budgeting, as exercised at the five organizational levels. Four decision items were examined in this decision category.

Item 1. Deciding the allocation of funds to a school from a school district. The highest percentage of respondents (59.7%) on this decision item indicated that the superintendent's office and the school board were perceived to have equal and major control. Very little control was perceived to be exercised by the provincial education department and the principal's office, while teachers were perceived to have no control.

Table 4.01

Percentage Distribution of Responses to the Finance and Budgeting Category

(N=152)

Decision Items	Group	T	P	S	B	D
1. Finance to a school	(IS)		2.6	59.7	59.7	7.8*
	(SH)	1.3	12.0	61.3	61.3	
2. Finance in a school	(IS)	35.1	94.8	6.5	2.6	6.5
	(SH)	42.7	94.7	6.7	4.0	17.3
3. Finance of new programs	(IS)	1.3	11.7	54.5	63.6	
	(SH)	2.7	5.3	57.3	66.7	
4. Additional finance	(IS)	45.5	88.3*	9.1	3.9	
	(SH)	54.7	72.0	10.7	9.3	1.3

T = Teachers
P = Principal's Office
S = Superintendent's Office
B = School Board
D = Provincial Education Department
(IS) = "IS" Questionnaire
(SH) = "SHOULD BE" Questionnaire
* = Significant Difference, $p \leq .05$

The same percentage of respondents (61.3%) indicated that control should be held equally by the superintendent's office and the school board. Respondents also indicated that some control should be exercised by the principal, but almost none by teachers. A Chi-square analysis by group (is, should be) indicated a significant difference between perceptions of the actual (7.8%) and preferred degree of control(0%) by the provincial education department. In this regard, respondents preferred that the provincial education department should not have any control over the allocation of funds to a school from a school district.

Item 2. Deciding the distribution of expenditures within a school. A large percentage of respondents (94.8%) indicated that control over this decision was perceived to be held mainly by the principal and moderately by teachers (35.1%), while other groups were perceived to have very little control.

Similarly, respondents indicated that major control should be held by the principal. Teachers should have moderate control while other groups should have very little control.

Item 3. Deciding to allocate funds to a new instructional program. According to respondents, major control over this item was perceived to be held by the school board (63.6%) and the superintendent's office (54.5%), while the principal was perceived to exercise some control (11.7%). Teachers and the provincial education department were perceived to have little and no control, respectively.

Similarly, respondents indicated that major control should be held by the school board (66.7%) and the superintendent's office (57.3%), while other groups should have very little or no control.

Item 4. Deciding on methods to raise additional funds for a particular school. On this decision item, most respondents indicated that a high degree of control over methods to raise additional funds was perceived to be held by the principal's office (88.3%) and moderately by teachers (45.5%), while other groups were perceived to have little or no control.

A Chi-square analysis by group (is, should be) indicated a significant difference between perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control by the principal's office. Respondents indicated that a lesser degree of control by the principal's office (72.0%) was preferred, while teachers _should_ have a moderate degree of control (54.7%). Other groups should have very little control over this decision, according to respondents.

Discussion. The results indicated that the school board and the superintendent's office were perceived to have major and equal control over finance to the school and the finance of new programs. Other groups were perceived to have very little control. Overall, the status quo was generally acceptable to trustees and administrators on these decisions.

The principal's office was perceived to have major control over finance within the school and the decision to raise additional funds. On these decisions, teachers were perceived to have a moderate level of control, while other groups were perceived to have very little control. Overall, these results suggest that the principal had dominant power, authority and influence over finance within the school, while teachers had a moderate level of control.

The preferred loci of control were perceived to be largely similar to the actual loci of control, except for two decision items. A significant difference was evident on finance to the school. Although the results indicated that the provincial education department was perceived to exercise some control over this decision, respondents preferred that the department should have no control over this matter. These findings suggest that the allocation of funds to a school was perceived to be a matter of local concern, possibly in some danger of provincial intervention, since respondents preferred no involvement by the provincial education department.

A significant difference was also evident on additional finance. Respondents indicated that the principal's office was perceived to have more control over this decision than was preferred. Trustees and administrators preferred that other groups, particularly teachers, should have greater control over this decision.

Capital Expenditures

Table 4.02 presents the perceived distribution of the actual and preferred degree of control over capital expenditures, as exercised at the five organizational levels. Four decision items were examined in this decision category.

Item 5. Deciding to make additions to school buildings. Responses on this decision item indicated that the school board (81.8%) was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control, followed by the superintendent's office (41.6%), which was perceived to have a moderate level of control. The provincial education department's level of control (16.9%) was perceived to be low. The principal's office was perceived to have less control, while teachers were perceived to have none.

The respondents' preferences for the locus of control were largely similar to the perceptions of actual control, indicating that a high degree of control should be held by the school board (84.0%) and a moderate level by the superintendent's office (41.3%). A Chi-square analysis by group (is, should be) indicated a significant difference between perceptions of the actual control by the provincial education department (16.9%) and the preferred level of control (4.0%). Similarly, a significant difference was evident between perceptions of the actual level of control by the principal's office (5.2%) and the preferred level of control (17.3%). Lastly, respondents did not perceive any involvement of teachers in control over building additions.

Item 6. Deciding to close a school. Responses on this decision item indicated that the school board (94.8%) was perceived to have the highest degree of control, while the provincial education department (16.9%) and the superintendent's office (13.0%) were perceived to have some control. Although the principal's office was perceived to have very little control over school closure, teachers were perceived to have none.

Regarding the preferred locus of control, respondents indicated that a high degree of control should be held by the school board (94.7%) and much less control should be held by the superintendent's office (22.7%). A Chi-square analysis by group (is, should be) indicated

Table 4.02

Percentage Distribution of Responses to the Capital Expenditures Category

(N=152)

	Decision Items	Group	T	P	S	B	D
5.	Building changes	(IS)		5.2*	41.6	81.8	16.9*
		(SH)		17.3	41.3	84.0	4.0
6.	School closure	(IS)		2.6	13.0	94.8	16.9*
		(SH)	1.3	5.3	22.7	94.7	5.3
7.	Special features	(IS)	6.5	28.6	46.8	41.6	6.5
		(SH)	12.0	44.0	37.3	52.0	4.0
8.	Special schools	(IS)		1.3	32.5	84.4	27.3
		(SH)		2.7	25.3	86.7	26.7

T = Teachers
P = Principal's Office
S = Superintendent's Office
B = School Board
D = Provincial Education Department
(IS) = "IS" Questionnaire
(SH) = "SHOULD BE" Questionnaire
* = Significant Difference, $p \leq .05$

a significant difference between perceptions of the actual control by the provincial education department (16.9%) and the preferred level of control (5.3%). Respondents also indicated that principals and teachers should have almost no control over this decision.

Item 7. Deciding to include special features (music room, lunch room) in school buildings. The highest percentage of responses on this decision item indicated that the superintendent's office (46.8%) and the school board (41.6%) were perceived to have the highest degree of control. The principal's office was perceived to have a moderate level of control (28.6%), while the provincial education department and teachers were perceived to have very little control.

Respondents indicated that the school board (52.0%) should have major control, along with the principal's office (44.0%), followed by the superintendent's office (37.3%). They felt that the provincial education department (4.0%) and teachers (12.0%) should have very little control over special features in school buildings.

Item 8. Deciding to establish special schools for handicapped children. Responses on this decision item indicated that the school board (84.4%) was perceived to have the highest degree of control, while the superintendent's office (32.5%) and the provincial education department (27.3%) were perceived to have a moderate degree of control. Principals and teachers, however, were perceived to have very little and no control, respectively.

The respondents' preferences for the locus of control were largely similar to the perceptions of actual control, indicating that a high degree of control should be held by the school board (86.7%), while the provincial education department (26.7%) and the superintendent's office (25.3%) should have some control. According to respondents, principals and teachers should have very little and no control, respectively.

Discussion. In the area of capital expenditures, the school board was perceived to have major control over three decision items: building changes, school closure and special schools for handicapped children. Other groups were perceived to have much less control over these decisions. In addition, the superintendent's office and the school board were perceived to have almost equal control over special features in a school. Although respondents felt that the principal's office also had some control over this decision item, other groups were perceived to have very little control. Overall, these results suggest that control over special features is largely a responsibility shared by three groups of decision makers. Although three groups also shared control over special schools for handicapped children, the power, authority and influence of the school board or political level was very high.

The preferred loci of control were perceived to be largely similar to the actual loci of control, except for perceptions regarding two decison items. A significant difference was evident between perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control over building changes. Although the results indicated that the provincial education department was perceived to exercise some control over this decision, respondents preferred that the department should have almost no control over additions to school buildings. Moreover, the results indicated that the principal's office should have greater control over building changes than was perceived to be held. Control by the principal's office was perceived to be desirable, probably because the principal has overall responsibility for the operation of a school. Greater local autonomy, as opposed to provincial control, was favored regarding this decision. However, teachers may not have any meaningful input to make on this decision, since their involvement was not necessary, according to trustees and administrators.

A significant difference was evident between perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control over the decision to close a school. Respondents perceived that the provincial education department had more control over this decision than was preferred. Overall, respondents perceived that professionals who worked in schools had very little control over the decision to close a school. Perhaps trustees and administrators felt that a conflict of interest might arise, if school professionals had some control over this decision. Thus, actual power, authority and influence over school closure was largely concentrated at the level of the school board and the provincial education department. However, respondents preferred that the provincial education department should be less involved in this decision.

These findings imply that possible dissatisfaction existed among trustees and administrators over the extent of provincial control being exerted over building changes and school closure. In addition, there appeared to be a concern about the lack of control by the principal over building changes.

Equipment, Supplies and Services

Table 4.03 presents the perceived distribution of the actual and preferred degree of control over equipment, supplies and services. Four decision items were examined in this decision category.

Item 9. Deciding on the textbooks to be used in a subject area. According to respondents, the provincial education department was perceived to have the highest degree of control (51.9%) over this decision item. Three other groups including teachers (29.9%), the superintendent's office (27.3%) and the principal's office (23.4%) also were perceived to share some control. The school board (11.7%), however, was perceived to have the least control over this decision, according to respondents.

The preferred locus of control was similar to the perceived locus of actual control. According to respondents, the provincial education department (56.0%) should have major control, followed by teachers (42.7%), the principal's office (28.0%), the superintendent's office (20.0%) and the school board (8.0%).

Item 10. Deciding on regular transportation services for students. Respondents indicated that control over this decision was perceived to be largely held by the school board (71.4%) and to a lesser extent by the superintendent's office (50.6%). Other groups were perceived to have very little or no control over this decision.

Similarly, respondents indicated that major control should be held by the school board (73.3%) and the superintendent's office (46.7%), while other groups should have very little or no control.

Table 4.03

Percentage Distribution of Responses to the Equipment, Supplies and Services Category

(N=152)

Decision Items	Group	T	P	S	B	D
9. Textbooks	(IS)	29.9	23.4	27.3	11.7	51.9
	(SH)	42.7	28.0	20.0	8.0	56.0
10. Transportation	(IS)		1.3	50.6	71.4	3.9
	(SH)		2.7	46.7	73.3	6.7
11. Major equipment	(IS)	18.2	63.6	28.6	19.5	6.5*
	(SH)	29.3	74.7	30.7	14.7	
12. Classroom furnishings	(IS)	27.3	68.8	31.2	10.4	3.9
	(SH)	37.3	61.3	36.0	6.7	

T = Teachers
P = Principal's Office
S = Superintendent's Office
B = School Board
D = Provincial Education Department
(IS) = "IS" Questionnaire
(SH) = "SHOULD BE" Questionnaire
* = Significant Difference, $p \leq .05$

Item 11. Deciding on major equipment items for a particular school. The highest percentage of respondents (63.6%) indicated that the principal's office was perceived to have major control, while some control was also perceived to be held by the superintendent's office (28.6%), the school board (19.5%) and teachers (18.2%). The least amount of control (6.5%) was perceived to be held by the provincial education department.

Respondents indicated that control should be held by the principal's office (74.7%), followed by the superintendent's office (30.7%), teachers (29.3%) and the school board (14.7%). A Chi-square analysis by group (is, should be) indicated a significant difference between perceptions of the actual and preferred control by the provincial education department.

Item 12. Deciding on classroom furnishings. Responses on this decision item indicated that control was perceived to be held mainly by the principal's office (68.8%), while the superintendent's office (31.2%) and teachers (27.3%) were perceived to share much less control. Both the school board (10.4%) and the provincial education department (3.9%) were perceived to exercise very little control over classroom furnishings.

Similarly, respondents indicated that major control should be held by the principal's office (61.3%) and to a moderate extent by teachers (37.3%) and the superintendent's office (36.0%). The school board, however, should have very little control and the provincial education department no control over this decision, according to respondents.

Discussion. The results indicated that the provincial education department was perceived to have major control over the textbooks used in a subject area. Other groups were perceived to have a moderate level of control (teachers, superintendent's and principal's office), while the school board was perceived to have very little control. Overall, power, authority and influence over this decision was widely distributed, although the provincial education department was perceived to have major control.

However, the school board was perceived to have major control over transportation services, and the superintendent's office to have moderate control. Other groups had very little or no control over this decision. In general, control over transportation services was mainly a shared responsibility, although major control was perceived to be held by the school board or political level.

The principal's office was perceived to have greatest control over major equipment and classroom furnishings. Three other groups (the superintendent's office, teachers and the school board) were also perceived to share some control over equipment and furnishings, while the provincial education department was perceived to have least control. Overall, power, authority and influence over classroom furnishings was perceived to be widely distributed.

The preferred loci of control were generally perceived to be similar to the actual loci of control, except for one decision item. A significant difference was evident between perceptions of the actual and preferred control over major equipment. Although the results indicated that the provincial education department was perceived to exercise some control over this decision, respondents preferred that the provincial education department should have no control. These findings imply that trustees and administrators probably were not satisfied with the extent of provincial control over major equipment and that they may have perceived some danger in provincial intervention.

In general, the current state of affairs in this decision area was largely acceptable to trustees and administrators.

Curriculum and Instruction

Table 4.04 presents the perceived distribution of the actual and preferred degree of control over curriculum and instruction, as exercised at the five organizational levels. Four decision items were examined in this decision category.

Item 13. Deciding on instructional methods in the classroom. On this decision item, most respondents perceived that a high degree of control was held by teachers (89.6%) and some control by the principal's office (26.0%), while other groups had little or no control.

Table 4.04

Percentage Distribution of Responses to the Curriculum and Instruction Category

(N=152)

Decision Items	Group	T	P	S	B	D
13. Instructional methods	(IS)	89.6	26.0	6.5	1.3*	
	(SH)	88.0	38.7	10.7	1.3	1.3
14. Curriculum content	(IS)	18.2	6.5	15.6	9.1	80.5
	(SH)	26.7	18.7	16.0	13.3	77.3
15. Final marks	(IS)	88.3	33.8		1.3	1.3
	(SH)	86.7	34.7	1.3		2.7
16. Program evaluation policy	(IS)	6.5	27.3	53.2	53.2	9.1
	(SH)	16.0	29.3	64.0	50.7	14.7

T = Teachers
P = Principal's Office
S = Superintendent's Office
B = School Board
D = Provincial Education Department
(IS) = "IS" Questionnaire
(SH) = "SHOULD BE" Questionnaire
* = Significant Difference, $p \leq .05$

Respondents also indicated that a similar degree of control by teachers (88.0%) was preferred, while the principal should have a moderate degree of control (38.7%). Other groups should have very little control over this decision, according to respondents.

Item 14. Deciding on the content of the curriculum for a subject area. Responses on this decision item indicated that the provincial education department (80.5%) was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control, followed by teachers (18.2%), who were perceived to have considerably less control. Other groups also were perceived to have very little control.

The respondents' preferences for the locus of control were largely similar to the perceptions of actual control. Respondents indicated that a high degree of control should be held by the provincial education department (77.3%), followed by teachers (26.7%), the principal's office (18.7%), the superintendent's office (16.0%) and the school board (13.3%).

Item 15. Deciding on the final grades or marks in a subject area. Responses on this decision item indicated that teachers (88.3%) were perceived to have the highest degree of control, followed by the principal's office (33.8%), while other groups were perceived to have little or no control.

The respondents' preferences for the locus of control were largely similar to the perceptions of actual control, indicating that a high degree of control should be held by teachers (86.7%) and a moderate level by the principal's office (34.7%). Other groups should have very little or no control over final marks.

Item 16. Deciding on policies for evaluating instructional programs. Responses on this decision item indicated that the school board (53.2%) and the superintendent's office (53.2%) were perceived to exercise the highest degree of control, while the principal's office (27.3%) was perceived to have some control. The provincial education department (9.1%) and teachers (6.5%) were perceived to have very little control.

Regarding the preferred locus of control, responses indicated that control should be shared by the superintendent's office (64.0%) and the school board (50.7%), while the principal's office (29.3%) should also have some control. Teachers (16.0%) should have less control, while the provincial education department (14.7%) should have the least.

Discussion. The results indicated that teachers had the highest degree of control over instructional methods and final marks. While the principal's office was perceived to have some control, other groups were perceived to have very little. Overall, these findings suggest that teachers had considerable professional autonomy in the classroom with respect to instructional methods. They also suggest that teachers largely make the final decisions about grades or marks in a subject area. In general, the status quo was acceptable on both decisions. Regarding curriculum content, the provincial education department was perceived to have the highest degree of control. Yet some control was perceived to be shared by all other groups, suggesting a wide distribution of power, authority and influence over this decision item. Moreover, the status quo appeared to be largely acceptable to the respondents.

The school board and the superintendent's office were perceived to share control over program evaluation policies, although the principal's office also was perceived to have some control. The provincial education department and teachers, however, were perceived to have little control over this decision item. Trustees and administrators at the local level were perceived largely to control program evaluation policies, although the recent impetus for policy development in Alberta school districts may be traced to the Management and Finance Plan (1984) implemented by the provincial education department. In general, the status quo was acceptable with respect to the evaluation of instructional programs.

The preferred loci of control were generally perceived to be similar to the loci of of actual control. There were no significant differences between perceptions of the actual degree of control and the preferred degree of control over curriculum and instruction decisions. These results imply that there probably was considerable satisfaction among trustees and administrators regarding control over this decision category.

Personnel Management

Table 4.05 presents the perceived distribution of the actual and preferred degree of control over personnel management, as exercised at the five organizational levels. Four

Table 4.05

Percentage Distribution of Responses to the Personnel Management Category

(N=152)

Decision Items		Group	T	P	S	B	D
17.	Selection of a principal	(IS)	1.3		70.1	59.7	
		(SH)	1.3		74.7	48.0	
18.	Selection of a teacher	(IS)	2.6	84.4*	44.2	6.5	
		(SH)		96.0	28.0	1.3	
19.	Teaching assignments	(IS)	13.0	97.4	5.2		
		(SH)	22.7	98.7	2.7		
20.	Teacher evaluation	(IS)	10.4*	24.7*	68.8	50.6	10.4
		(SH)	26.7	44.0	68.0	38.7	14.7

T = Teachers
P = Principal's Office
S = Superintendent's Office
B = School Board
D = Provincial Education Department
(IS) = "IS" Questionnaire
(SH) = "SHOULD BE" Questionnaire
* = Significant Difference, $p \leq .05$

decision items were examined in this decision category.

Item 17. Deciding on selecting a principal for a school. The respondents on this decision item indicated that the superintendent's office (70.1%) and the school board (59.7%) were perceived to have the highest degree of control. Teachers (1.3%), however, were perceived to have very little control, while the provincial education department and the principal's office were perceived to have no control over this decision.

Respondents indicated that the superintendent's office (74.7%) should have major control, along with a moderate degree of control (48.0%) by the school board. They also indicated that teachers (1.3%) should have very little control, while the provincial education department and principals should have no control.

Item 18. Deciding on selecting a teacher for a school. Responses on this decision item indicated that the principal's office (84.4%) was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control, while the superintendent's office (44.2%) was perceived to exercise a moderate degree of control. The school board (6.5%) and teachers (2.6%) were perceived to have very little control, while the provincial education department was perceived to have none.

Respondents' preferences for the locus of control were similar to the perceptions of actual control. However, a large percentage of respondents indicated that the principal's office (96.0%) should have major control over this decision. A Chi-square analysis by group (is, should be) showed a significant difference between perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control by the principal's office. The superintendent's office (28.0%) should have considerably less control than the principal's office. Moreover, the school board should have very little control, while the provincial education department and teachers should have no control over teacher selection.

Item 19. Deciding on teaching assignments at a school (grade, subject areas). According to respondents, the principal's office was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control (97.4%) over this decision item. Two other groups, teachers (13.0%) and the superintendent's office (5.2%), were perceived to have very little control, while the school board and the provincial education department were perceived to have none.

The preferred locus of control was similar to the perceived locus of actual control. According to respondents, the principal's office (98.7%) should have major control, while teachers (22.7%) should have some control. The superintendent's office (2.7%) should have very little control, while the school board and the provincial education department should have none.

Item 20. Deciding on teacher evaluation procedures. Responses indicated that control over this decision was perceived to be largely shared by the superintendent's office (68.8%) and the school board (50.6%). All other groups also were perceived to have some control.

Similarly, respondents indicated that major control should be held by the superintendent's office (68.0%). A Chi-square analysis by group (is, should be) showed a significant difference between perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control by the principal's office. Respondents preferred that the principal's office should have more control over teacher evaluation procedures than was perceived to be held. The school board (38.7%) should have less control than was perceived. A Chi-square analysis by group (is, should be) showed a significant difference between perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control by teachers. Respondents preferred that teachers should have more control over teacher evaluation procedures than was perceived to be held by them. Lastly, the provincial education department (14.7%) should have little control over teacher evaluation procedures.

Discussion. The results indicated that the superintendent's office and the school board were perceived to share major control over the selection of a principal and teacher evaluation procedures. Other groups were perceived to exercise almost no control over the selection of a principal, while the principal's office was perceived to have some control over teacher evaluation procedures.

The principal's office, however, was perceived to exercise major control over the selection of a teacher and teaching assignments. Regarding the selection of a teacher, the superintendent's office was perceived to have a moderate level of control, while other groups were perceived to have little or no control. The principal was perceived to have dominant power, authority and influence over school teaching assignments. On this decision, teachers were perceived to have some control and other groups little or no control. Still, the status quo was largely acceptable to the respondents.

The preferred loci of control were perceived to be similar to the loci of actual control, except for two decision items. Significant differences were noted in the selection of a teacher and teacher evaluation procedures. Although the results indicated that the principal's office had major control over the selection of a teacher, respondents preferred that the principal's office should have even greater control.

In general, these findings imply that trustees and administrators were somewhat dissatisfied with the distribution of control over teacher selection. They preferred that the principal should have almost exclusive control over the selection of a teacher. Whether or not such a high concentration of power, authority and influence at a single organizational level over such a major decision is desirable may be debatable.

Overall, control over teacher evaluation procedures was widely distributed, although the status quo was not entirely satisfactory. Respondents felt that both teachers and principals should have greater control than at present over teacher evaluation procedures. These findings suggest that trustees and administrators generally favored greater decentralization of control over teacher evaluation procedures, so that both principals and teachers could have a larger role in the decision-making process. Overall, power, authority and influence over the personnel management category was fairly concentrated at the level of the superintendent's office, the school board and the principal's office.

In general, the status quo was largely acceptable to trustees and administrators.

Student Management

Table 4.06 presents the perceived distribution of the actual and preferred degree of control over student management, as exercised at the five organizational levels. Four decision items were examined in this decision category.

Table 4.06

Percentage Distribution of Responses to the Student Management Category

(N=152)

	Decision Items	Group	T	P	S	B	D
21.	Student conduct	(IS)	41.6*	79.2	13.0	18.2	1.3
		(SH)	61.3	81.3	16.0	18.7	1.3
22.	Student assessment	(IS)	46.8	53.2	37.7	10.4	7.8
		(SH)	52.0	57.3	41.3	16.0	8.0
23.	Student reporting	(IS)	40.3	72.7	35.1	14.3	
		(SH)	45.3	72.0	34.7	8.0	2.7
24.	School discipline	(IS)	40.3	93.5	9.1	7.8	
		(SH)	52.0	89.3	14.7	14.7	2.7

T = Teachers
P = Principal's Office
S = Superintendent's Office
B = School Board
D = Provincial Education Department
(IS) = "IS" Questionnaire
(SH) = "SHOULD BE" Questionnaire
* = Significant Difference, $p \leq .05$

Item 21. Deciding on standards for student conduct. The highest percentage of respondents on this decision item indicated that the principal's office (79.2%) was perceived to have major control over student conduct. A moderate level of control, however, was perceived to be held by teachers (41.6%), while some control was perceived to be held by the school board and the superintendent's office. The provincial education department was perceived to have almost no control over student conduct.

Most respondents indicated that control should be held by the principal's office (81.3%). A Chi-square analysis by group (is, should be) showed a significant difference between perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control by teachers. Respondents preferred that teachers should have considerably more control over student conduct than was perceived to be held by them. In addition, respondents preferred that some control should be held by the school board and the superintendent's office, while the provincial education department should have almost no control.

Item 22. Deciding on procedures for assessing student progress. Respondents indicated that control over this decision was perceived to be shared by the principal's office (53.2%), teachers (46.8%) and the superintendent's office (37.7%). The respondents also indicated that the school board and the provincial education department were perceived to exercise some control over student assessment.

Similarly, respondents indicated that moderate control should be shared by the principal's office, teachers and the superintendent's office, while the school board and the provincial education department should have some control.

Item 23. Deciding on procedures for reporting student progress. According to respondents, control over this decision item was perceived to be held by the principal's office (72.7%), while teachers (40.3%) and the superintendent's office (35.1%) were perceived to have a moderate degree of control. Although the school board (14.3%) was perceived to have some control, the provincial education department was perceived to have none.

Similarly, responses indicated that control should be held by the principal's office. Teachers and the superintendent's office should have a moderate degree of control, while the school board and the provincial education department should have little control.

Item 24. Deciding on school discipline procedures. On this decision item, most respondents perceived a high degree of control by the principal (93.5%) and moderate control by teachers (40.3%). Other levels were perceived to have little or no control.

Similarly, respondents indicated that a high degree of control by the principal was preferred, while teachers should have a moderate degree of control. Other levels should have little control over this decision, according to respondents.

Discussion. The results indicated that the principal's office was perceived to have major control over the four specific decision items examined in the student management category. On two of the decision items (student assessment and student reporting), the principal's office was perceived to share moderate control with teachers and the superintendent's office. A wide distribution of power, authority and influence was evident on both decisions. On the other two decision items (student conduct and school discipline procedures) the principal's office was perceived to have dominant control, while teachers were perceived to have moderate control. Other groups were perceived to have little control over these decisions.

The preferred loci of control were perceived to be largely similar to the actual loci of control, except for one decision item. A significant difference was evident on student conduct. Although the results indicated that teachers exercised moderate control over this decision, respondents preferred that teachers should have greater control. The status quo was not entirely satisfactory.

Although respondents preferred that teachers should have greater control over standards for student conduct, they felt it was not necessary for teachers to have greater control over school discipline procedures.

In general, however, the current state of affairs was largely acceptable concerning student management.

Organizational Structure

Table 4.07 presents the perceived distribution of the actual and preferred degree of control over organizational structure, as exercised at the five organizational levels. Four decision items were examined in this decision category.

Item 25. Deciding on the exact number of teachers required by a school. Responses on this decision item indicated that the superintendent's office (66.2%) was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control, while the principal's office was perceived to exercise a moderate degree of control (35.1%). The school board was perceived to have some control (22.1%), while the provincial education department was perceived to have almost none and teachers none.

Similarly, respondents indicated that a high degree of control should be held by the superintendent's office (61.3%), while a moderate level should be held by the principal's office. The school board should also have some control over the number of teachers, while teachers should have very little control and the provincial education department none.

Item 26. Deciding on the timetable or lesson schedule for a school. Responses on this decision item indicated that the principal (89.6%) was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control, while teachers were perceived to exercise a moderate level of control (36.4%). Other groups were perceived to have little or no control over the school timetable.

Regarding the preferred locus of control, respondents indicated that a high degree of control should be held by the principal (93.3%), while teachers should have a moderate level of control (38.7%). Other groups, however, should have little or no control, according to respondents.

Item 27. Deciding the minimum and maximum instructional times for subject areas. The highest percentage of respondents on this decision item indicated that the provincial

Table 4.07

Percentage Distribution of Responses to the Organizational Structure Category

(N=152)

Decision Items	Group	T	P	S	B	D
25. Number of teachers	(IS)		35.1	66.2	22.1	1.3
	(SH)	4.0	50.7	61.3	16.0	
26. School timetable	(IS)	36.4	89.6	1.3		
	(SH)	38.7	93.3	2.7	1.3	
27. Instructional time	(IS)	5.2	27.3	19.5	13.0	66.2
	(SH)	9.3	24.0	25.3	22.7	68.0
28. Class size	(IS)	6.5	45.5	40.3	42.9	1.3
	(SH)	9.3	54.7	34.7	46.7	

T = Teachers
P = Principal's Office
S = Superintendent's Office
B = School Board
D = Provincial Education Department
(IS) = "IS" Questionnaire
(SH) = "SHOULD BE" Questionnaire
* = Significant Difference, $p \leq .05$

education department (66.2%) was perceived to have major control. All other groups were perceived to have some control over instructional time.

Similarly, a large percentage of respondents indicated that the provincial education department *should* have major control over instructional time. All other groups should have some control, according to respondents.

Item 28. Deciding the minimum and maximum class sizes in a school. Responses on this decision item indicated that the principal's office (45.5%), the school board (42.9%) and the superintendent's office (40.3%) were perceived to share control over class size. Teachers and the provincial education department, however, were perceived to have very little control over this decision.

The respondents' preferences for the locus of control were largely similar to the perceptions of actual control, indicating that a moderate level of control over class size *should* be shared by the principal's office, the school board and the superintendent's office. Teachers, however, should have little control over class size, and the provincial education department none.

Discussion. The results indicated that the superintendent's office was perceived to exercise major control over one decision item, the number of teachers required by a school. Overall, control over this decision was perceived to be largely held by the administration, although the school board had some control. The principal's office was perceived to have major control over the school timetable. Teachers were perceived to exercise moderate control over this decision. In this regard, the professional autonomy of the teacher was very limited with respect to the timetable or lesson schedule. This might be expected largely because of the principal's overall responsibility for the operation of a school.

Although power, authority and influence over instructional time was somewhat distributed at the local level, provincial control was perceived to be largely dominant. Overall, control over class size was fairly evenly distributed among three stakeholder groups at the local level. Teachers and the provincial education department were perceived to have little control over this decision.

The preferred loci of control were perceived to be largely similar to the actual loci of control. There were no significant differences between the actual and preferred degree of control on any of the decision items at various organizational levels. In large measure, the status quo on this decision category was largely acceptable to the respondents.

Community Relations

Table 4.08 presents the perceived distribution of the actual and preferred degree of control over community relations, as exercised at the five organizational levels. Four decision items were examined in this decision category.

Item 29. Deciding on how to involve parents in school activities. According to respondents, the principal's office was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control (90.9%) over this decision item. Teachers were perceived to exercise a moderate degree of control (37.7%), while all other groups were perceived to have very little or no control over parental involvement.

The preferred locus of control was similar to the actual locus of control. According to respondents, the principal's office (89.3%) should have major control, while teachers (46.7%) should also have moderate control. Other groups, however, should have very little control over parental involvement, according to respondents.

Item 30. Deciding on the use of a school building by community groups. Respondents indicated that control over this decision was perceived to be held largely by the principal's office (57.1%), while a moderate level of control was perceived to be held by the school board (37.7%) and the superintendent's office (31.2%). The provincial education department and teachers were perceived to have very little control over this decision.

Similarly, respondents indicated that major control should be held by the principal's office (61.3%), while a moderate level should be held by the school board (37.3%) and the superintendent's office (32.0%). Other groups should have very little control over the

Table 4.08

Percentage Distribution of Responses to the Community Relations Category

(N=152)

	Decision Items	Group	T	P	S	B	D
29.	Parental involvement	(IS)	37.7	90.9	6.5	6.5	
		(SH)	46.7	89.3	8.0	9.3	2.7
30.	Community use of a school	(IS)	1.3	57.1	31.2	37.7	1.3
		(SH)	4.0	61.3	32.0	37.3	1.3
31.	Parent advisory committee	(IS)	11.7*	93.5	5.2	2.6*	1.3
		(SH)	29.3	93.3	8.0	10.7	
32.	School achievement	(IS)	5.2	18.2	44.2	57.1	3.9
		(SH)	1.3	14.7	57.3	52.0	4.0

T = Teachers
P = Principal's Office
S = Superintendent's Office
B = School Board
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(IS) = "IS" Questionnaire
(SH) = "SHOULD BE" Questionnaire
* = Significant Difference, $p \leq .05$

community use of a school.

Item 31. Deciding to establish a parent advisory committee at a school. The highest percentage of respondents on this decision item indicated that the principal's office (93.5%) was perceived to exercise major control. Some control was perceived to be exercised by teachers (11.7%), although other groups generally were perceived to have very little control over establishing a school parent advisory committee.

A high percentage of respondents also indicated that major control should be held by the principal (93.3%). A Chi-square analysis by group (is, should be) indicated a significant difference between perceptions of the actual control by the school board (2.6%) and the preferred control (10.7%). Similarly, a Chi-square analysis indicated a significant difference between perceptions of the teachers' actual level of control (11.7%) and the preferred degree of control (29.3%). Lastly, respondents did not perceive a need for much control by the superintendent's office over this decision and none by the provincial education department.

Item 32. Deciding to release to the public details of school achievement test results. A moderate percentage of respondents indicated that control over this decision was perceived to be shared by the school board (57.1%) and the superintendent's office (44.2%). Some control was also perceived to be held by the principal's office (18.2%), while the provincial education department and teachers were perceived to have very little control.

Similarly, respondents indicated that major control should be shared by the superintendent's office (57.3%) and the school board (52.0%). While the principal's office (14.7%) should have some control over this decision, other groups should have very little control, according to the respondents.

Discussion. The results indicated that the principal's office was perceived to have major control over parental involvement and the establishment of a school parent advisory committee. In general, control over the community use of a school was widely distributed at the local level. No single decision-making group was dominant regarding the public announcement of school achievement test results. Teachers were perceived to have a moderate degree of control over parental involvement and some control over the establishment of a parent advisory committee. The provincial education department, however, was perceived to have almost no control over community relations, according to respondents. This finding might be expected since this decision category largely dealt with matters related to the local community or local control.

The preferred loci of control were perceived to be largely similar to the actual loci of control, except for one decision item, the establishment of a school parent advisory committee. Significant differences were evident on this decision item. Although the results indicated that the school board and teachers were perceived to exercise some control over this decision, respondents preferred that both groups should have greater control. These findings suggest that respondents preferred a shift in the locus of control over establishing a parent advisory committee.

For the most part, however, the status quo was largely acceptable regarding community relations.

Implementation of New Programs

Table 4.09 presents the perceived distribution of the actual and preferred degree of control over the implementation of new programs, as exercised at the five organizational levels. Four decision items were examined in this decision category.

Item 33. Deciding if a pilot project of an instructional program should be implemented. Responses on this decision item indicated that the school board (50.6%) and the superintendent's office (49.4%) were perceived to share control in this area. The principal's office (27.3%) was perceived to have some control over this decision, while the provincial education department and teachers were perceived to have little control.

Respondents indicated that major control should be held by the superintendent's office (58.7%), while the school board (33.3%) and the principal's office (32.0%) should have moderate control. Teachers and the provincial education department, however, should have little control over pilot projects, according to respondents.

Table 4.09

Percentage Distribution of Responses to the New Programs Category

(N=152)

Decision Items	Group	T	P	S	B	D
33. Implementation of pilot	(IS)	9.1	27.3	49.4	50.6	7.8
	(SH)	16.0	32.0	58.7	33.3	12.0
34. Continuation of pilot	(IS)	7.8	20.8	48.1	57.1	10.4
	(SH)	14.7	25.3	56.0	44.0	13.3
35. Language program	(IS)	6.5	24.7	39.0	70.1	1.3
	(SH)	2.7	30.7	32.0	78.7	5.3
36. Special education	(IS)		11.7	58.4	63.6	5.2
	(SH)	4.0	18.7	50.7	73.3	5.3

T = Teachers
P = Principal's Office
S = Superintendent's Office
B = School Board
D = Provincial Education Department
(IS) = "IS" Questionnaire
(SH) = "SHOULD BE" Questionnaire
* = Significant Difference, $p \leq .05$

Item 34. Deciding if a pilot project of an instructional program should be approved as an ongoing school program. On this decision item, respondents indicated that a moderate degree of control was shared by the school board (57.1%) and the superintendent's office (48.1%). The principal's office also was perceived to have some control (20.8%), while the provincial education department and teachers were perceived to have little control.

Respondents indicated that shared control by the superintendent's office (56.0) and the school board (44.0) was preferred, while principals (25.3) should also have some control. Teachers and the provincial education department should have least control over this decision, according to respondents.

Item 35. Deciding to implement a language program (immersion, bilingual). Responses on this decision item indicated that the school board (70.1%) was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control, followed by the superintendent's office (39.0%). The principal's office was perceived to have some control (24.7%), while teachers and the provincial education department were perceived to have little control over this decision.

The respondents' preferences for the locus of control were largely similar to the perceptions of the actual locus of control, indicating that a high degree of control should be held by the school board (78.7%), and a moderate level by the superintendent's (32.0%) and principal's office (30.7%). Respondents, however, perceived little need for the provincial education department or teachers to have control over the implementation of a language program.

Item 36. Deciding to implement a special education program for handicapped students. Responses on this decision item indicated that the school board (63.6%) and the superintendent's office (58.4%) were perceived to share control over this item. The principal's office (11.7%) also was perceived to have some control, while the provincial education department and teachers were perceived to have little and no control, respectively.

Regarding the preferred locus of control, respondents indicated that control should be held by the school board (73.3%) and the superintendent's office (50.7%). Principals should have some control, while the provincial education department and teachers should have very little control, according to respondents.

Discussion. The results indicated that the school board was perceived to have major control over the four decision items, although it shared almost an equal amount of control with the superintendent's office on three of them. These findings might be expected considering the political implications and possible long-term consequences of implementing new programs. With regard to the implementation of a language program, the superintendent's office was perceived to exercise a moderate degree of control. The principal's office was perceived to exercise some control over all decisions, although least control over special education.

The preferred loci of control were perceived to be largely similar to the actual loci of control on all four decision items. There were no significant differences between perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control on all decision items at each of the organizational levels. These results suggest that there was probably a high level of satisfaction among trustees and administrators regarding the actual and preferred distribution of control over new programs.

Of particular interest, the provincial education department and teachers were perceived to have least control over all four decision items relating to the new programs decision category. These findings suggest that initiatives for the implementation of new programs may arise primarily at the local level from the school administration or the school board.

Overall, the status quo regarding the implementation of new programs was acceptable to the respondents.

Policy Making and Decision Making

Table 4.10 presents the perceived distribution of the actual and preferred degree of control over policy making and decision making, as exercised at the five organizational levels. Four decision items were examined in this decision category.

Table 4.10

Percentage Distribution of Responses to the New Programs Category

(N=152)

Decision Items		Group	T	P	S	B	D
37.	School district policies	(IS)	1.3	2.6	28.6	92.2	2.6
		(SH)	6.7	6.7	24.0	96.0	2.7
38.	School philosophy	(IS)	48.1	88.3	6.5	10.4	1.3
		(SH)	62.7	86.7	8.0	13.3	1.3
39.	Teacher participation	(IS)	13.0*	92.2	13.0	9.1	1.3
		(SH)	36.0	81.3	16.0	13.3	
40.	School policies	(IS)	36.4	96.1	6.5	2.6	
		(SH)	45.3	92.0	5.3	4.0	

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(IS) = "IS" Questionnaire
(SH) = "SHOULD BE" Questionnaire
• = Significant Difference, $p \leq .05$

Item 37. Deciding on school district policies. The highest percentage of respondents on this decision item indicated that the school board (92.2%) was perceived to exercise major control, while the superintendent's office (28.6%) was perceived to exercise much less control. All other groups were perceived to exercise very little control over school district policies.

The respondents' preferences for the locus of control were largely similar to the perceptions of the actual locus of control. The school board should have major control (96.0%) over this decision item, according to respondents. With the exception of the superintendent's office, other groups should have very little control over school district policies.

Item 38. Deciding on school philosophy. Responses on this decision item indicated that the principal's office (88.3%) was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control, while teachers (48.1%) were perceived to exercise moderate control. Other groups were perceived to have little control over school philosophy.

The respondents' preferences for the locus of control were largely similar to the perceptions of the actual locus of control, indicating that a high degree of control (86.7%) should be held by the principal, although teachers (62.7%) should have considerable control. Other groups should have little control, according to respondents.

Item 39. Deciding on the extent of teacher participation in school decision making. According to respondents, the principal's office was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control (92.2%) over this decision item. All other groups were perceived to exercise much less control over teacher participation in school decision making.

The preferred locus of control was similar to the actual locus of control, except for one significant difference, as evident on a Chi-square analysis. A significantly greater degree of control should be held by teachers (36.0%) than was actually perceived to be held by them (13.0%). Still, principals should have major control (81.3%), while all other groups should have very little or no control over teacher participation in school decision making.

Item 40. Deciding on specific policies at the school level. Respondents indicated that control over this decision item was perceived to be held largely by the principal's office (96.1%). Although teachers were perceived to have moderate control (36.4%), all other groups were perceived to have very little or no control over school policies.

Similarly, responses indicated that major control should be held by the principal's office (92.0%), while teachers should have moderate control (45.3%). All other groups should have very little or no control, according to respondents.

Discussion. The results indicated that the principal's office was perceived to have major control over three decision items: school philosophy, teacher participation in decision making and school policies. These findings suggest that considerable decentralization of control over specific school matters actually existed, according to respondents. Teachers, however, were perceived to have only moderate control over two of the decisions, school philosophy and school policies, while other groups were perceived to have little control over all three of the foregoing decisions. The school board, however, was perceived to have major control over school district policies, while the superintendent's office was perceived to have some control. Lastly, other groups were perceived to have very little control.

These results suggest that the school board is at the centre of power and has almost exclusive control over school district policies. Still, this finding may not adequately account for the considerable power, authority and influence of the superintendent's office in the policy-making sphere of a large, urban school district. In actual practice, a decision of the school board may often consist of the ratification of a policy largely developed by the administration.

The preferred loci of control were perceived to be largely similar to the actual loci of control, except for one decision item, teacher participation in decision making. The findings regarding this decision beg the question: "Is dominant control by the principal over teacher participation in school decision making desirable?" In this regard, trustees and administrators preferred that teachers should have greater control over participation in school decision making. Overall, the status quo was largely acceptable with respect to policy making and decision making.

Overall Perceived Degree of Actual Control

This section addresses the following sub-problem:

Sub-Problem 2. What is the overall perceived degree of actual control over educational decisions, exercised by each one of the five organizational levels?

Table 4.11 presents in rank order the perceived degree of actual control by organizational level over each decision item. The sequence of organizational levels listed from left to right indicates an increasing degree of control over the decision item. For example, regarding the first item (finance to a school), teachers (T) had the lowest perceived control, while the superintendent's office (S) and the school board (B) were tied for the highest perceived control. The ranking by level was based on the percentage distribution of actual control (IS questionnaire results) presented in the preceeding section. Whenever two levels had the same percentage of responses, a slash (/) was used to indicate that the levels were tied in rank order, although the higher organizational level was placed in the higher category.

Table 4.12 shows how many times each level was listed in a particular position in the rank order. The mean was calculated by finding the average score on 40 decisions for each of the five organizational levels. Each level was assigned a value from one to five, corresponding to its rank order, so that a value of one indicated lowest control and a five highest control. Each mean was obtained by multiplying the frequency of the organizational level by the value of the position in the rank order, adding the totals for all five positions in the rank order and dividing by 40 (the total number of decisions). The mean score thus indicates the overall perceived degree of actual control by the organizational level on a scale from one to five.

The Principal's Office

The organizational level with the highest mean score (3.73) was the principal's office (Table 4.12). It was perceived to have the highest degree of actual control over eighteen of the forty decision items, more than any other organizational level.

Table 4.11

Rank Order of Perceived Degree of Actual Control
by Organizational Level

Decision Items	Item No.	Low 1	2	3	4	High 5
Finance and Budgeting (F)						
Finance to a school	1	T	P	D	S /	B
Finance in a school	2	B	S /	D	T	P
Finance of new programs	3	D	T	P	S	B
Additional finance	4	D	B	S	T	P
Capital Expenditures (C)						
Building changes	5	T	P	D	S	B
School closure	6	T	P /	D	S	B
Special features	7	T /	D	P	B	S
Special schools	8	T	P	D	S	B
Equipment, Supplies and Services (E)						
Textbooks	9	B	P	S	T	D
Transportation	10	T	P	D	S	B
Major equipment	11	D	T	B	S	P
Classroom furnishings	12	D	B	T	S	P
Curriculum and Instruction (I)						
Instructional methods	13	D	B	S	P	T
Curriculum content	14	P	B	S	T	D
Final marks	15	S	B /	D	P	T
Program evaluation policies	16	T	D	P	S /	B
Personnel Management (P)						
Selection of a principal	17	P /	D	T	B	S
Selection of a teacher	18	D	T	B	S	P
Teaching assignments	19	B /	D	S	T	P
Teacher evaluation	20	T /	D	P	B	S

?

Table 4.11 (Continued)

Rank Order of Perceived Degree of Actual Control
by Organizational Level

Decision Items	Item No.	Low				High
		1	2	3	4	5
Student Management (S)						
Student conduct	21	D	S	B	T	P
Student assessment	22	D	B	S	T	P
Student reporting	23	D	B	S	T	P
School discipline	24	D	B	S	T	P
Organizational Structure (O)						
Number of teachers	25	T	D	B	P	S
School timetable	26	B /	D	S	T	P
Instructional time	27	T	B	S	P	D
Class size	28	D	T	S	B	P
Community Relations						
Parental involvement	29	D	S /	B	T	P
Community use of a school	30	T /	D	S	B	P
Parent advisory committee	31	D	B	S	T	P
School achievement	32	D	T	P	S	B
New Programs (N)						
Implementation of pilot	33	D	T	P	S	B
Continuation of pilot	34	T	D	P	S	B
Language program	35	D	T	P	S	B
Special education	36	T	D	P	S	B
Policy Making and Decision Making (D)						
School district policies	37	T	P /	D	S	B
School philosophy	38	D	S	B	T	P
Teacher participation	39	D	B	T /	S	P
School policies	40	D	B	S	T	P

Table 4.12

Distribution of the Perceived Degree of Actual Control over Decisions by Organizational Level

Organizational Level	Rank					Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
Principal's Office (P)	2	7	9	4	18	3.73
Superintendent's Office (S)	1	4	14	17	4	3.48
School Board (B)	4	12	6	5	13	3.28
Teachers (T)	14	7	3	14	2	2.58
Education Department (D)	19	10	8	-	3	1.95

As indicated in Table 4.11, these items pertained to the following decision categories: (1) student management; (2) community relations; (3) policy making and decision making; (4) finance and budgeting; (5) equipment, supplies and services; (6) personnel management; and (7) organizational structure. The principal's office was perceived to have the highest degree of control over all four items in the student management category and over three items in each of the community relations, policy making and decision making categories. In the other four decision categories, the principal's office was perceived to have the highest degree of actual control over two decision items in each category.

Moreover, the principal's office was perceived to have the second-highest degree of actual control over four decisions, two in each of two decision categories: curriculum and instruction, and organizational structure. The principal's office was perceived to have the third-highest degree of actual control over nine decision items in six decision categories.

Also, the principal's office was perceived to have the least control over two decision items, deciding on curriculum content and the selection of a principal. It was perceived to have the second-lowest degree of control over seven decisions, the same number as teachers.

The Superintendent's Office

The organizational level with the second-highest mean score (3.48) was the superintendent's office (Table 4.12). It was perceived to have the highest degree of actual control over four of the forty decision items.

As indicated in Table 4.11, these items pertained to the following three decision categories: (1) personnel management; (2) capital expenditures; and (3) organizational structure. The superintendent's office was perceived to have the highest degree of control over two items in the personnel management category and one item in each of the capital expenditures category and the organizational structure category.

In addition, the superintendent's office was perceived to have the second-highest degree of actual control over seventeen decision items in the following categories: (1) new programs; (2) equipment, supplies and services; (3) finance and budgeting; (4) capital expenditures; (5) policy making and decision making; (6) curriculum and instruction; (7) personnel management; and (8) community relations. The superintendent's office was perceived to have the second-highest degree of actual control over all four items in the new programs category; over three items in the equipment, supplies and services category; and over two items in each of the following categories: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) capital expenditures; and (3) policy making and decision making. One item was identified in each of the other three categories.

Moreover, the superintendent's office was perceived to have the third-highest degree of actual control over fourteen decision items in eight categories.

The superintendent's office was perceived to have the least control over only one decision item -- deciding on final marks. Also, it was perceived to have the second-lowest degree of control over only four decision items, less than any other organizational level in the two-lowest positions of rank order.

The School Board

The organizational level with the third-highest mean score (3.28) was the school board (Table 4.12). It was perceived to have the highest degree of actual control over thirteen of the forty decision items.

As indicated in Table 4.11, these items pertained to the following seven decision categories: (1) new programs; (2) capital expenditures; (3) finance and budgeting; (4) equipment, supplies and services; (5) curriculum and instruction; (6) community relations; and (7) policy making and decision making. The school board was perceived to have the highest degree of actual control over all four items in the new programs category; over two items in finance and budgeting; and over one item in each of the other categories.

In addition, the school board was perceived to have the second-highest degree of actual control over five decision items in the following four categories: (1) personnel management; (2) capital expenditures; (3) organizational structure; and (4) community relations. Two items were identified in personnel management, while one item was identified in each of the other categories.

Moreover, the school board was perceived to have the third-highest degree of actual control over six decision items in six decision categories. Although it was perceived to have the least control over only four decision items, it was perceived to have the second-lowest degree of control over twelve decisions.

Teachers

The organizational level with the second-lowest mean score (2.58) was the teacher level (Table 4.12). Teachers were perceived to have the highest degree of actual control over only two of the forty decision items.

As indicated in Table 4.11, these two decision items pertained to the curriculum and instruction decision category. In addition, teachers were perceived to have the second-highest degree of actual control over fourteen decision items: all four items in student management; two items in finance and budgeting; community relations; and, policy making and decision making; and one item in each of four other categories.

Teachers were perceived to have the third-highest degree of actual control over three decision items, one in each of three different categories. Also, teachers were perceived to have the least control over fourteen decisions and the second-lowest degree of control over seven decisions.

The Provincial Education Department

Of the five organizational levels, the provincial education department was perceived to have the lowest mean score (1.95) on the degree of actual control (Table 4.12). It was perceived to have the highest degree of actual control over only three of the forty decision items.

As indicated in Table 4.11, each of the three items pertained to one of the following three decision categories: (1) equipment, supplies and services; (2) curriculum and instruction; and (3) organizational structure.

The provincial education department was perceived to have the third-highest degree of actual control over eight decision items: three items in the capital expenditures category; two items in finance and budgeting; and one item in each of three other categories.

The provincial education department was perceived to have the least control over nineteen decisions, more than any other organizational level. Also, it was perceived to have the second-lowest degree of control over ten decisions.

Discussion. These results are not surprising. They appear to confirm that control over many educational decisions resides in the principal's office; indeed, a trend toward greater control by the principal's office may be indicated by these data. For instance, one of the school districts studied adopted school-based budgeting more than five years ago. More recently, school-based staffing was adopted by two of the districts. Further evidence of the trend toward greater power, authority and influence for the principal is found in a statement about the role of the principal in the Alberta Education document, Partners in Education (1985).

Overall, the principal's office was perceived to have a relatively high degree of actual control over all but one decision category, namely, capital expenditures.

The perceived degree of control by the principal's office exceeded that of the superintendent's office in six of the ten decision categories, including: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) curriculum and instruction; (3) student management; (4) organizational structure; (5) community relations; and (6) policy making and decision making. The superintendent's office, however, was perceived to have greater control than the principal's office over the following decision categories: (1) capital expenditures; (2) equipment, supplies and services; (3) personnel management; and (4) new programs.

The school board was perceived to have a high degree of control over many of the same decision categories as the superintendent's office. Only two decision categories, student management and curriculum and instruction, were not controlled to any great extent by the school board.

Regarding teachers, the results might be expected, since teachers work at the organizational level most directly involved in delivering services to the student clientele. In this regard, teachers as a group were perceived to have a high degree of control over student management, curriculum and instruction, and policy making and decision making.

The results also might be expected regarding the provincial education department since this study largely dealt with operational decision making; that is, matters pertaining to the day-to-day operations of schools.

Summary. Overall, the results indicated that major control over most decision categories was perceived to be held by the principal's office, the superintendent's office and the school board, while teachers and the provincial education department were perceived to have the least control over most decision categories.

Overall Degree of Preferred Control

This section addresses the following sub-problem:

Sub-Problem 4. What is the overall degree of preferred control over educational decisions at each one of the five organizational levels?

Table 4.13 presents in rank order the perceived degree of preferred control by organizational level over each decision item. The sequence of organizational levels listed from left to right indicates an increasing degree of control over the decision item. For example, regarding the first item (finance to a school), the education department (D) had the lowest preferred control, while the superintendent's office (S) and the school board(B) were tied for the highest preferred control. The rank order by level was based on the percentage distribution of control (SHOULD BE questionnaire results) presented earlier in this chapter. Whenever two levels had the same percentage of responses, a slash (/) was used to indicate that the levels were tied in rank order, although the higher organizational level was placed in the higher category.

Table 4.13

Rank Order of Perceived Degree of Preferred Control
by Organizational Level

Decision Items	Item No.	Low 1	2	3	4	High 5
Finance and Budgeting (F)						
Finance to a school	1	D	T	P	S /	B
Finance in a school	2	B	S	D	T	P
Finance of new programs	3	D	T	P	S	B
Additional finance	4	D	B	S	T	P
Capital Expenditures (C)						
Building changes	5	T	D	P	S	B
School closure	6	T	P /	D	S	B
Special features	7	D	T	S	P	B
Special schools	8	T	P	S	D	B
Equipment, Supplies and Services (E)						
Textbooks	9	B	S	P	T	D
Transportation	10	T	P	D	S	B
Major equipment	11	D	B	T	S	P
Classroom furnishings	12	D	B	T /	P	S
Curriculum and Instruction (I)						
Instructional methods	13	B /	D	S	P	T
Curriculum content	14	B	S	P	T	D
Final marks	15	B	S	D	P	T
Program evaluation policies	16	D	T	P	B	S
Personnel Management (P)						
Selection of a principal	17	P /	D	T	B	S
Selection of a teacher	18	T /	D	B	S	P
Teaching assignments	19	B /	D	S	T	P
Teacher evaluation	20	D	T	B	P	S

Table 4.13 (Continued)

Rank Order of Preferred Control

by Organizational Level

Decision Items	Item No.	Low				High
		1	2	3	4	5
Student Management (S)						
Student conduct	21	D	S	B	T	P
Student assessment	22	D	B	S	T	P
Student reporting	23	D	B	S	T	P
School discipline	24	D	S	B	T	P
Organizational Structure (O)						
Number of teachers	25	D	T	B	P	S
School timetable	26	D	B	S	T	P
Instructional time	27	T	B	P	S	D
Class size	28	D	T	S	B	P
Community Relations						
Parental involvement	29	D	S	B	T	P
Community use of a school	30	D	T	S	B	P
Parent advisory committee	31	D	S	B	T	P
School achievement	32	T	D	P	B	S
New Programs (N)						
Implementation of pilot	33	D	T	P	B	S
Continuation of pilot	34	D	T	P	B	S
Language program	35	T	D	P	S	B
Special education	36	T	D	P	S	B
Policy Making and Decision Making (D)						
School district policies	37	D	T	P	S	B
School philosophy	38	D	S	B	T	P
Teacher participation	39	D	B	S	T	P
School policies	40	D	B	S	T	P

Table 4.14 shows how many times each level was listed in a particular position in the rank order. The mean was calculated by finding the average score on 40 decisions for each of the five organizational levels. Each level was assigned a value from one to five, corresponding to its rank order, so that a value of one indicated lowest control and a five highest control. Each mean was obtained by multiplying the frequency of the organizational level by the value of the position in the rank order, adding the totals for all five positions in the rank order and dividing by 40 (the total number of decisions). The mean score thus indicated the overall degree of preferred control by the organizational level on a scale from one to five.

The Principal's Office

The organizational level with the highest mean score (3.88) was the principal's office (Table 4.14). It had received the highest degree of preferred control over seventeen of the forty decision items, more than any other organizational level.

As indicated in Table 4.13, these items pertained to the following decision categories: (1) student management; (2) community relations; (3) policy making and decision making; (4) finance and budgeting; (5) personnel management; (6) organizational structure; and (7) equipment, supplies and services. Similar to the perceived degree of actual control, it was preferred that the principal's office have the highest degree of control over all four items in the student management category and over three items in each of the community relations and policy making and decision making categories. In the next three decision categories, the principal's office was preferred to have the highest degree of control over two decision items in each category and over one item in the last category.

Moreover, the principal's office was preferred to have the second-highest degree of control over six decisions, two in curriculum and instruction and one item in each of four other decision categories. The principal's office was preferred to have the third-highest degree of control over thirteen decision items in eight decision categories.

Also, the principal's office was preferred to have the least control over one decision item, the selection of a principal. It was preferred to have the second-lowest degree of

Table 4.14

Distribution of the Preferred Control over Decisions by Organizational Level

Organizational Level	Rank					Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
Principal's Office (P)	1	3	13	6	17	3.88
Superintendent's Office (S)	0	9	12	11	8	3.45
School Board (B)	6	9	8	7	10	3.15
Teachers (T)	9	11	3	15	2	2.75
Education Department (D)	24	8	4	1	3	1.78

control over three decisions.

The Superintendent's Office

The organizational level with the second-highest preferred mean score (3.45) was the superintendent's office (Table 4.14). It was preferred to have the highest degree of control over eight of the forty decision items.

As indicated in Table 4.13, these items pertained to the following six decision categories: (1) personnel management; (2) new programs; (3) equipment, supplies and services; (4) curriculum and instruction; (5) organizational structure; and (6) community relations. The superintendent's office was preferred to have the highest degree of control over two items in the personnel management and new programs categories and one item in each of the other four categories.

In addition, the superintendent's office was preferred to have the second-highest degree of control over eleven decision items in the following categories: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) capital expenditures; (3) equipment, supplies and services; (4) new programs; (5) personnel management; (6) organizational structure; and (7) policy making and decision making. It was preferred to have the second-highest degree of control over two items in the first four decision categories, and over one item in the other three decision categories.

The superintendent's office was preferred to have the third-highest degree of control over twelve decision items in eight categories.

Respondents did not prefer the superintendent's office to have the least control over any decision items. However, it was preferred to have the second-lowest degree of control over nine decision items in six decision categories.

The School Board

The organizational level with the third-highest mean score (3.15) was the school board (Table 4.14). It was preferred to have the highest degree of control over ten of the forty decision items.

As indicated in Table 4.13, these items pertained to the following five decision categories: (1) capital expenditures; (2) finance and budgeting; (3) new programs; (4) equipment, supplies and services; and (5) policy making and decision making. The school board was preferred to have the highest degree of control over all four items in the capital expenditures category; over two items in finance and budgeting and new programs; and over one item in each of the other categories.

The school board was preferred to have the second-highest degree of actual control over seven decision items in the following five categories: (1) community relations; (2) new programs; (3) curriculum and instruction; (4) personnel management; and (5) organizational structure. Two of the items were in personnel management, while one item was in each of the other categories.

Moreover, the school board was preferred to have the third-highest degree of control over eight decision items in five decision categories. Although it was preferred to have the least control over six decision items, it was preferred to have the second-lowest degree of control over nine decisions.

Teachers

Teachers were perceived to have the second-lowest mean score (2.75) of any organizational level (Table 4.14). They were perceived to have the highest degree of actual control over only two of the forty decision items.

As indicated in Table 4.13, these two decision items pertained to the curriculum and instruction decision category. In addition, teachers were preferred to have the second-highest degree of control over fifteen decision items: all four items in student management; three items in policy making and decision making; two items in finance and budgeting, and community relations; and one item in each of four other categories.

Teachers were preferred to have the third-highest degree of preferred control over three decision items in two decision categories. Lastly, teachers were preferred to have the least control over nine decisions, and the second-lowest degree of control over eleven decisions.

The Provincial Education Department

The provincial education department had the lowest mean score (1.78) on the degree of preferred control (Table 4.14). It was preferred to have the highest degree of control over only three of the forty decision items.

As indicated in Table 4.13, each of the three items pertained to one of the following three decision categories: (1) equipment, supplies and services; (2) curriculum and instruction; and (3) organizational structure.

The provincial education department was preferred to have the second-highest degree of control over one decision item in the capital expenditures category. In addition, it was preferred to have the third-highest degree of control over four decision items -- one item in each of four different categories.

Lastly, the provincial education department was preferred to have the least control over twenty-four decisions, more than any other organizational level. Also, it was preferred to have the second-lowest degree of preferred control over eight decisions.

Discussion. In general, the overall perceived degree of actual and preferred control by the principal's office were very similar for most decision categories.

However, the perceptions of actual and preferred control by the superintendent's office were fairly different. For example, the superintendent's office was preferred to have the highest degree of control over eight decision items, as compared to the highest degree of actual control over four items. In particular, less control was preferred by the superintendent's office over capital expenditures but greater control over new programs; equipment, supplies and services; curriculum and instruction, and community relations.

In addition, the superintendent's office was preferred to have the second-highest degree of control over only eleven decision items, as compared to the second-highest degree of actual control over seventeen decision items.

In general, the overall perceived degree of actual and preferred control by the school board were largely similar for most decision categories.

The overall perceived degree of actual and preferred control by teachers were very similar for most decision categories. Of particular interest, however, respondents preferred that teachers should have greater control over policy making and decision making than was perceived to exist at the time of the study.

However, the overall perceived degree of actual and preferred control by the provincial education department were largely similar for most decision categories.

Summary. Overall, the results indicated that major control over most decisions was preferred to be held by the principal's office, the superintendent's office and the school board, while teachers and the provincial education department were preferred to have the least control over most decision categories.

In general, the overall perceived degree of actual and preferred control by the principal's office, the school board, teachers and the provincial education department were very similar for most decision categories. However, the findings suggest that respondents desired to see some changes with respect to control over specific educational decisions by the superintendent's office -- less control over some decisions but greater control over others.

Comparison of the Overall Perceived Degree of Actual and Preferred Control

This section addresses the following sub-problem:

Sub-Problem 5. How is the overall perceived degree of actual control over educational decisions related to the overall preferred control at each of the five organizational levels?

A two-tailed *t* test for independent samples was used to analyse the mean differences between the overall perceived degree of actual control and the overall preferred control by organizational level. Table 4.15 presents the results of the analyses.

As indicated in Table 4.15, there were no significant differences between the overall perceived degree of actual and preferred control at the five organizational levels. These

Table 4.15

Comparison of the Overall Perceived Degree of Actual and Preferred Control by Organizational Level

N=40

Organizational Level	Group	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	t value
Principal's Office	(IS) (SH)	3.73 3.88	1.3 1.1	-0.54
Superintendent's Office	(IS) (SH)	3.48 3.45	0.9 1.1	0.11
School Board	(IS) (SH)	3.28 3.15	1.5 1.4	0.39
Teachers	(IS) (SH)	2.58 2.75	1.4 1.3	-0.57
Education Department	(IS) (SH)	1.95 1.78	1.2 1.2	0.66

results suggest that there was considerable agreement among trustees and administrators regarding the distribution of actual and preferred control over educational decisions at each of the five organizational levels.

B. ANALYSES ACROSS ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS

The final section addresses the following sub-problem:

Sub-Problem 6. How are the perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control related across the five organizational levels on various decision items?

Table 4.16 presents the statistically significant differences on Chi-square analyses of the responses to the actual and preferred degree of control across all five organizational levels on each of the forty decision items. These analyses provided a global assessment of perceptions regarding the actual and preferred degree of control.

A comparison of the responses (is, should be) indicated that there were significant differences on four decision items (Table 4.16):

1. Finance to a school;
2. Building changes;
3. Teacher evaluation procedures; and
4. Teacher participation in decision making.

These results suggest that respondents were not entirely satisfied with the actual degree of control being exercised over the aforementioned decisions across various organizational levels. Overall, however, there was a high level of congruence between the actual and preferred degree of control exercised over the other thirty-six decision items. No significant differences between perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control were evident on these items.

Discussion. In general, these findings suggest a high level of agreement among trustees and administrators regarding their perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control over educational decisions across various organizational levels. However, preferences

Table 4.16

Comparison of Responses (Is, Should Be) on Decision Items Across Organizational Levels

	Characteristics	Chi-Square	Degrees of Freedom	P
1.	Finance to a school	11.44	4	< 0.022
2.	Building changes	11.01	3	< 0.012
3.	Teacher evaluation	9.87	4	< 0.043
4.	Teacher participation	9.73	4	< 0.045

regarding the locus of control differed significantly from the perceived actual control among trustees and administrators regarding four decision items in the following decision categories: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) capital expenditures; (3) personnel management; and (4) policy making and decision making.

C. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the data on perceptions of trustees and administrators regarding the degree of control over educational decisions exercised at various organizational levels. Analyses of the perceptions of control indicated which of the five organizational levels exercised or should exercise control over forty decision items.

Actual degree of control. In summary, the principal's office, the superintendent's office and the school board were perceived to have major control over most decision categories. Teachers and the provincial education department were perceived to have the least overall control. These findings might be expected since the decision categories largely dealt with operational matters, mainly pertaining to local issues and matters of program and policy implementation.

Preferred degree of control. According to respondents, principals were preferred to have less control over one decision, deciding on methods to raise additional funds for a particular school. On the contrary, respondents preferred the principal's office to have more control over three decisions: building changes, the selection of a teacher and teacher evaluation procedures. Respondents also felt that the school board should have more control over one decision, the establishment of a school parent advisory committee.

Respondents preferred teachers to have more control over four specific decision items: teacher evaluation procedures, student conduct, the establishment of a parent advisory committee, and the extent of teacher participation in decision making. Lastly, respondents preferred the provincial education department to have less control over four decisions: finance to a school, building changes, school closure and major equipment.

In general, the status quo was acceptable to the respondents regarding three decision categories: curriculum and instruction, organizational structure and new programs. The greatest discrepancies between the actual and preferred degree of control, however, were evident in the following decision categories: finance and budgeting, capital expenditures, personnel management and community relations. Of particular interest, the first two categories largely concerned economic matters.

In summary, the principal's office, the superintendent's office and the school board were preferred to have major or shared control over most decision categories. Teachers and the provincial education department were preferred to have the least overall control. Finally, a high level of congruence in the perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control over educational decisions across various organizational levels existed among trustees and administrators.

Chapter V

LOCUS OF CONTROL OVER EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

This chapter presents the results of the analyses relating to the perceived locus of control over educational decisions. It also examines the relationship of various background characteristics to the perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control.

The first part of this chapter addresses the following sub-problems:

Sub-Problem 7. What is the perceived locus of actual control over educational decisions?

Sub-Problem 8. What is the locus of preferred control over educational decisions?

Sub-Problem 9. How is the perceived locus of actual control related to the locus of preferred control?

A. DEGREE OF CENTRALIZATION OR DECENTRALIZATION

The distribution of control over various decision items was analyzed by means of an autonomy scale. The scale measured the locus of control over each decision (degree of centralization or decentralization). For each decision item, the locus of control was established as a mean score of all respondents on a scale from one to 15. To determine locus of control scores, each response to a decision item was assigned a numerical value. All possible responses to a particular decision item were assigned values, according to the configurations of possible responses presented in Figure 5.01.

For example, a score of one was assigned to a response in which the provincial education department was the only organizational level identified by a respondent to have major control over a particular decision item. Similarly, a score of two was assigned to a response in which the provincial education department and the school board jointly were perceived to have major control over a particular decision. Thus, the locus of control score of one represented high centralization, while a value of 15 represented high decentralization.

High Centralization (Low Decentralization)

1 = Education Department
2 = Education Department + School Board
3 = Education Department + School Board + Superintendent's Office
4 = Education Department + other
5 = School Board
6 = School Board + Superintendent's Office
7 = School Board + Superintendent's Office + Principal's Office
8 = School Board + other
9 = Superintendent's Office
10 = Superintendent's Office + Principal's Office
11 = Superintendent's Office + Principal's Office + Teachers
12 = Superintendent's Office + other
13 = Principal's Office
14 = Principal's Office + Teachers
15 = Teachers

Low Centralization (High Decentralization)

Figure 5.01

Autonomy Scale

A mean score of 7.5 indicated balanced forces, neither high centralization nor high decentralization.

Mean scores were determined for each of the forty decision items regarding the actual and preferred locus of control. Each mean score, therefore, represented the perceived locus of control over the decision item, which existed at the time of the study, according to respondents. A two-tailed t test for independent samples was used to analyze the differences between the mean scores on the perceived actual and preferred locus of control.

Comparison of the Perceived Locus of Actual and Preferred Control

Table 5.01 presents a comparison of the locus of control scores (is, should be) on each of the forty decision items. As indicated in Table 5.01, comparisons of locus of control scores (is, should be) on the forty decision items indicated there were no significant differences in seven decision categories: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) curriculum and instruction; (3) student management; (4) organizational structure; (5) community relations; (6) implementation of new programs; and (7) policy making and decision making.

On the contrary, significant differences were evident in three decision categories: (1) capital expenditures; (2) equipment, supplies and services; and (3) personnel management. Regarding capital expenditures, a significant difference was evident between the actual and preferred locus of control scores (is, should be) on two decision items (building changes and school closure). In both cases, respondents preferred greater decentralization than was perceived to exist at the time of the study. A significant difference was also found between the perceived actual and preferred locus of control scores on major equipment. Respondents preferred greater decentralization over this decision. Finally, a significant difference was evident between the perceived actual and preferred locus of control scores in the selection of a teacher.

Table 5.01

Comparison of Locus of Control Scores (Is, Should Be) on Decision Items

Decision Item	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t value
Finance and Budgeting (F)					
1. Finance to a school	(IS)	77	6.6	2.2	-1.30
	(SH)	75	7.0	2.0	
2. Finance in a school	(IS)	77	13.1	1.4	-0.35
	(SH)	75	13.1	1.4	
3. Finance of new programs	(IS)	77	6.6	2.3	1.86
	(SH)	75	5.9	2.3	
4. Additional finance	(IS)	77	13.0	1.8	0.83
	(SH)	75	12.6	3.0	
Capital Expenditures (C)					
5. Building changes	(IS)	77	5.4	1.9	-2.07*
	(SH)	75	6.0	2.0	
6. School closure	(IS)	77	4.7	1.4	-2.19*
	(SH)	73	5.2	1.1	
7. Special features	(IS)	77	8.1	3.5	-0.43
	(SH)	75	8.3	3.5	
8. Special schools	(IS)	77	4.7	1.9	0.73
	(SH)	74	4.5	1.7	

Table 5.01 (Continued)

Comparison of Locus of Control Scores (Is, Should Be) on Decision Items

Decision Item	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t value
Equipment, Supplies and Services (E)					
9. Textbooks	(IS)	77	6.4	5.3	-0.38
	(SH)	75	6.8	5.8	
10. Transportation	(IS)	77	6.2	1.9	0.19
	(SH)	75	6.1	2.1	
11. Major equipment	(IS)	77	10.2	3.8	-2.28*
	(SH)	75	11.4	2.8	
12. Classroom furnishings	(IS)	75	11.3	3.2	-1.52
	(SH)	75	12.0	2.6	
Curriculum and Instruction (I)					
13. Instructional methods	(IS)	76	14.4	1.5	1.51
	(SH)	75	13.9	2.0	
14. Curriculum content	(IS)	77	3.4	4.3	-1.01
	(SH)	75	4.2	4.8	
15. Final marks	(IS)	76	14.3	1.8	0.34
	(SH)	74	14.2	1.9	
16. Program evaluation policy	(IS)	76	7.6	3.3	0.92
	(SH)	75	7.1	2.8	

Table 5.01 (Continued)

Comparison of Locus of Control Scores (Is, Should Be) on Decision Items

Decision Item	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t value
Personnel Management (P)					
17. Selection of a principal	(IS)	77	7.0	2.0	-1.16
	(SH)	72	7.4	2.0	
18. Selection of a teacher	(IS)	77	11.2	2.0	-2.87**
	(SH)	75	12.1	1.5	
19. Teaching assignments	(IS)	77	13.0	0.9	-1.64
	(SH)	75	13.2	0.7	
20. Teacher evaluation	(IS)	77	7.3	2.7	-1.89
	(SH)	75	8.2	3.1	
Student Management (S)					
21. Student conduct	(IS)	77	11.8	3.2	-1.07
	(SH)	75	12.3	2.7	
22. Student assessment	(IS)	76	11.0	3.7	-0.02
	(SH)	75	11.0	3.5	
23. Student reporting	(IS)	77	11.4	2.7	-1.06
	(SH)	75	11.8	2.6	
24. Student discipline	(IS)	77	12.8	1.9	1.16
	(SH)	75	12.3	2.8	

Table 5.01 (Continued)

Comparison of Locus of Control Scores (Is, Should Be) on Decision Items

Decision Item	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t value
Organizational Structure (O)					
25. Number of teachers	(IS) (SH)	77 75	9.4 9.9	2.7 2.5	-1.27
26. School timetable	(IS) (SH)	77 75	13.1 13.3	2.2 1.0	-0.93
27. Instructional time	(IS) (SH)	76 75	4.5 4.1	4.6 4.0	0.60
28. Class size	(IS) (SH)	76 74	8.9 9.0	3.3 3.4	-0.19
Community Relations (R)					
29. Parental involvement	(IS) (SH)	77 75	12.9 12.7	2.0 2.5	0.59
30. Community use of a school	(IS) (SH)	77 74	9.5 9.5	3.4 3.3	0.01
31. Parent advisory committee	(IS) (SH)	76 75	12.7 12.5	1.8 2.1	0.43
32. School achievement	(IS) (SH)	77 74	7.3 7.3	3.0 2.7	-0.03

Table 5.01 (Continued)

Comparison of Locus of Control Scores (Is, Should Be) on Decision Items

Decision Item	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t value
Implementation of New Programs (N)					
33. Implementation of a pilot	(IS) (SH)	77 75	7.6 8.3	3.3 3.7	-1.21
34. Continuation of a pilot	(IS) (SH)	77 75	7.0 7.6	3.1 3.4	-1.05
35. Language program	(IS) (SH)	77 75	6.9 6.6	2.9 2.8	0.61
36. Special education program	(IS) (SH)	77 75	6.8 6.4	2.4 2.2	1.05
Policy Making and Decision Making (D)					
37. School district policies	(IS) (SH)	77 75	5.4 5.4	1.2 1.1	0.36
38. School philosophy	(IS) (SH)	77 75	12.6 12.7	2.7 2.6	-0.19
39. Teacher participation	(IS) (SH)	77 75	12.3 12.4	2.3 2.5	-0.16
40. School policies	(IS) (SH)	77 74	13.0 13.1	1.5 1.6	-0.53

** Significant at .01 level
* Significant at .05 level

Discussion

These findings suggest that there was considerable agreement among trustees and administrators regarding the perceived actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions. However, trustees and administrators favored greater decentralization with respect to building changes, school closure, major equipment and the selection of a teacher.

In summary, no significant differences were evident between the perceived actual and preferred locus of control scores on thirty-six of the forty decision items. Significant differences were evident, however, in three decision categories: capital expenditures; equipment, supplies and services; and, personnel management. In these decision areas, trustees and administrators favored greater decentralization.

Rank Order of the Actual and Preferred Locus of Control

Table 5.02 presents the perceived actual and preferred locus of control over the forty decision items by rank order of means. The table compares respondents' perceptions of the perceived actual and preferred locus of control.

The Spearman rank order correlation between the perceived actual and preferred locus of control scores was 0.99, statistically significant at the .001 level. These results indicated a high correlation between the two sets of locus of control scores. Overall, these findings suggest that there was a high congruence between the perceived actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions, according to respondents.

The highest centralization on the basis of perceived actual mean scores was on a decision item from the curriculum and instruction category (curriculum content). The next item on which respondents perceived the highest centralization was from the category of organizational structure (instructional time). Although in different order, the same two items were also preferred to have the highest centralization. In all, six decision categories were represented by the first ten decision items with the highest centralization on the basis of the rank order of perceived actual mean scores.

Table 5.02

Locus of Control over Decisions by Rank Order of Means

Category	Decision Item	Mean	Actual Rank	Mean	Preferred Rank
I	Curriculum content	3.4	1.0	4.2	2.0
O	Instructional time	4.5	2.0	4.1	1.0
C	School closure	4.7	3.5	5.2	4.0
C	Special schools	4.7	3.5	4.5	3.0
C	Building changes	5.4	5.5	6.0	7.0
D	School district policies	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.0
E	Transportation	6.2	7.0	6.1	8.0
E	Textbooks	6.4	8.0	6.8	11.0
F	Finance to a school	6.6	9.5	7.0	12.0
F	Finance of new programs	6.6	9.5	5.9	6.0
N	Special education	6.8	11.0	6.4	9.0
N	Language program	6.9	12.0	6.6	10.0
P	Selection of a principal	7.0	13.5	7.4	15.0
N	Continuation of a pilot	7.0	13.5	7.6	16.0
P	Teacher evaluation	7.3	15.5	8.2	17.0
R	School achievement	7.3	15.5	7.3	14.0
I	Program evaluation policies	7.6	17.5	7.1	13.0
N	Implementation of a pilot	7.6	17.5	8.3	18.5
C	Special features	8.1	19.0	8.3	18.5
O	Class size	8.9	20.0	9.0	20.0
O	Number of teachers	9.4	21.0	9.9	22.0
R	Community use of a school	9.5	22.0	9.5	21.0
E	Major equipment	10.2	23.0	11.4	24.0
S	Student assessment	11.0	24.0	11.0	23.0
P	Selection of a teacher	11.2	25.0	12.1	27.0
E	Classroom furnishings	11.3	26.0	12.0	26.0
S	Student reporting	11.4	27.0	11.8	25.0
S	Student conduct	11.8	28.0	12.3	28.5
D	Teacher participation	12.3	29.0	12.4	30.0
D	School philosophy	12.6	30.0	12.7	33.5
R	Parent advisory committee	12.7	31.0	12.5	31.0
S	School discipline	12.8	32.0	12.3	28.5
R	Parental involvement	12.9	33.0	12.7	33.5
F	Additional finance	13.0	35.0	12.6	32.0
P	Teaching assignments	13.0	35.0	13.2	37.0
D	School policies	13.0	35.0	13.1	35.5
F	Finance in a school	13.1	37.5	13.1	35.5
O	School timetable	13.1	37.5	13.3	38.0
I	Final marks	14.3	39.0	14.2	40.0
I	Instructional methods	14.4	40.0	13.9	39.0

Spearman Rho = 0.99, $p \leq .001$

Of the ten lowest-ranked decisions, three were from the capital expenditures category (school closure, special schools and building changes). Four items (two from each category) were from equipment, supplies and services (transportation, textbooks) and finance and budgeting (finance to a school, finance of new programs). Lastly, three decision items (one from each category) were from curriculum and instruction (curriculum content), organizational structure (instructional time) and policy making and decision making (school district policies).

The locus of preferred control was very similar to that of the perceived actual control. The same six decision categories were represented by the first ten decision items with the highest centralization regarding the locus of preferred control. One additional category was also represented, namely, the new programs category (special education, language program).

Overall, economic matters appeared dominant in the group of ten decisions with the highest centralization on the perceived locus of actual control, including three items from the capital expenditures category and two each from the equipment, supplies and services, and finance and budgeting categories. Economic matters were also dominant in the group of ten decisions with the highest centralization on the locus of preferred control. Three items were from the capital expenditures category, while two items were from the new programs category and one each from the equipment, supplies and services, and finance and budgeting categories. Conversely, the two items with the highest decentralization on the basis of perceived actual mean scores were both in the curriculum and instruction category (instructional methods, final marks).

In all, seven decision categories were represented by the ten decision items with the highest decentralization on the basis of the rank order of perceived actual mean scores. In addition to the two items in curriculum and instruction, two items pertained to finance and budgeting (finance in a school, additional finance), another two items to community relations (parental involvement, establishment of a parent advisory committee) and one each from four decision categories: student management (school discipline), personnel management (teaching assignments), policy making and decision making (school policies) and organizational structure (school timetable).

Similarly, six of the same decision categories were represented by the ten decision items with the highest decentralization on the locus of preferred control. However, the student management category was not among these, although one additional decision item from the policy making and decision making category (school philosophy) was included.

Summary. The results of this study indicated that there was a high congruence between the perceived actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions. Apparently, an optimal level of control existed at various organizational levels with respect to most decision categories. The two most highly-centralized decision categories were capital expenditures and equipment, supplies and services. Both of these categories largely dealt with matters of an economic nature. Conversely, the two most highly-decentralized decision categories were curriculum and instuction and finance and budgeting. The former category pertained largely to the professional autonomy of teachers, while the latter largely dealt with finance at the school level. However, on specific decision items, significant differences were evident between the perceived actual and preferred locus of control, as noted earlier.

B. BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

This part of the chapter addresses the following sub-problem:

Sub-Problem 11. To what extent do differences exist regarding the perceived actual and preferred control over educational decisions on the basis of the following background characteristics of respondents: (1) gender; (2) age; (3) formal education; (4) position; (5) number of years in a position; (6) years of administrative experience; (7) school district; (8) type of school; and (9) size of school?

Thus, nine background characteristics or variables were examined to determine their relationship, if any, to the locus of control scores on each of the forty decision items. In Chapter 3, it was reported that there were no significant differences on demographic characteristics between Group A and B respondents. These findings confirmed the similarity of the two groups of respondents; there was little likelihood that confounding variables (background characteristics) might have biased the study.

In most cases, background characteristics were unrelated to each other. However, position was related to three other variables, including gender, years in present position and formal education. Gender was also related to formal education. Age was positively related to administrative experience. The type and size of school were also related. Thus, the succeeding analyses might have been affected to some extent by the interaction of the aforementioned background characteristics.

Gender

How is gender related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions?

A two-tailed _t_ test for independent samples was used to analyze the mean differences between the scores of male and female respondents on each of the forty decision items. Table 5.03 presents the statistically significant differences in the locus of control scores by gender. As indicated in Table 5.03, significant differences were evident on four decision items on the actual locus of control.

On three decisions, the mean scores of male respondents were significantly higher than those of female respondents. On these decisions (finance of new programs, F-3; student conduct, S-21; and the announcement of school achievement results, R-32), males perceived that greater decentralization existed than did females. On one decision (parent advisory committee, R-31), however, the mean scores of female respondents were significantly higher than those of male respondents. On this decision, females perceived that greater decentralization existed than did males.

On thirty-six of the forty decision items regarding the actual locus of control, however, there were no significant differences between the mean scores of male and female respondents. Notwithstanding, these findings suggest that gender is weakly related to perceptions of the actual locus of control over educational decisions.

Table 5.03

Comparison of Mean Locus of Control Scores by Gender

Category Item No.	Type	N	Group 1 (female) 2 (male)	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	t value	Groups
F-3	IS	13	1	5.2	2.6	-2.43*	2>1
		64	2	6.9	2.2		
S-21	IS	13	1	10.1	4.2	-2.19*	2>1
		64	2	12.2			
R-31	IS	13	1	13.2	0.4	2.09*	1>2
		63	2	12.6	2.0		
R-32	IS	13	1	5.2	2.1	-2.86**	2>1
		64	2	7.7	3.0		
F-4	SH	10	1	13.7	0.5	2.90**	1>2
		65	2	12.5	3.2		
E-10	SH	10	1	7.4	2.1	2.11*	1>2
		65	2	6.0	2.0		
P-17	SH	10	1	5.7	1.3	-3.07**	2>1
		62	2	7.6	1.9		
N-34	SH	10	1	5.6	2.3	-2.00*	2>1
		65	2	7.9	3.5		
N-35	SH	10	1	5.0	1.2	-3.40**	2>1
		65	2	6.8	3.0		

** Significant at .01 level
* Significant at .05 level

As indicated in Table 5.03, significant differences were evident on five decision items on the preferred locus of control. On three decisions, the mean scores of male respondents were significantly higher than those of female respondents. On these decisions (selection of a principal, P-17; continuation of a pilot, N-34; and language program, N-35), males preferred greater decentralization than did females. On two decisions, however, the scores of female respondents were significantly higher than those of male respondents. On these decisions (additional finance, F-4 and transportation, E-10), females preferred greater decentralization than did males.

On thirty-five of the forty decision items regarding the preferred locus of control, however, there were no significant differences between perceptions of male and female respondents. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that gender is weakly related to the preferred locus of control over educational decisions. Since gender was related to both position and formal education, the strength of this relationship might have been even weaker than indicated by these results.

Age

How is age related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 5.04 presents the statistically significant differences in the locus of control scores by age. As indicated in Table 5.04, significant differences were evident on five decision items regarding the actual locus of control.

On three decisions, the mean scores of the age group of 41 to 50 were significantly higher than for the age group of 51-70. On these decisions (student conduct, S-21; student assessment, S-22; and parental involvement, R-29), the former group perceived that greater decentralization existed than did the latter. On one decision (school policies, D-40),

Table 5.04

Comparison of Mean Locus of Control Scores by Age

Category Item No.	Type	N	1 31-40	2 41-50	3 51-70	F	Groups
C-7	IS	76	10.9	7.1	8.2	5.3**	1>2,3
S-21	IS	76	13.4	12.3	10.6	4.0*	1,2>3
S-22	IS	75	14.6	11.5	9.2	10.0**	1>2,3; 2>3
R-29	IS	76	13.2	13.5	12.1	5.4**	2>3
D-40	IS	76	12.1	13.4	12.8	3.4*	2>1
R-29	SH	75	10.0	12.7	13.1	3.5*	2,3>1
D-37	SH	75	4.2	5.6	5.3	3.5*	2>1

** Significant at .01 level
* Significant at .05 level

respondents aged 41 to 50 perceived greater decentralization than did those aged 31 to 40. On three decisions (special features, C-7; student conduct, S-21; and student assessment, S-22), the mean scores of the age group 31 to 40 were significantly higher than for the age group of 51-70. On these decisions, the former perceived that greater decentralization existed than did the latter. On two items (special features, C-7; and student assessment, S-22), the mean scores of the age group 31 to 40 were significantly higher than for the age group 41 to 50. On these decisions, the former perceived greater decentralization than did the latter.

On thirty-five of the forty decision items regarding the actual locus of control, however, there were no significant differences on the basis of age. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that age is weakly related to perceptions of the actual locus of control over educational decisions.

As indicated in Table 5.04, significant differences were evident on two decision items regarding the preferred locus of control. On both decisions, the mean scores of the group aged 41 to 50 were significantly higher than for the group aged 31 to 40. On these decisions, the former group preferred greater decentralization than did the latter. Also, on one decision (parental involvement, R-29), the mean scores of the group aged 51 to 70 were significantly higher than for the group aged 31 to 40. On this decision, the former preferred greater decentralization than did the latter.

On thirty-eight of the forty decision items regarding the preferred locus of control, however, there were no significant differences on the basis of age. These findings suggest that age is very weakly related to perceptions of the locus of preferred control over educational decisions, if at all.

Formal Education

How is formal education related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions?

A two-tailed t test for independent samples was used to analyze the mean differences between the scores of respondents with a bachelor's degree or less and those with a graduate degree on each of the forty decision items. Table 5.05 presents the statistically significant differences in the locus of control scores by formal education.

As indicated in Table 5.05, a significant difference was evident between the two groups of respondents on one decision item regarding the actual locus of control. On this decision, mean scores of respondents with a graduate degree were significantly higher than were those of respondents with a bachelor's degree or less. Respondents with a graduate degree perceived that greater decentralization existed over student conduct than did respondents with a bachelor's degree or less.

On thirty-nine of the forty decision items regarding the actual locus of control, however, there were no significant differences on the basis of formal education. These findings suggest that formal education is very weakly related to perceptions of the actual locus of control over educational decisions, if at all.

As indicated in Table 5.05, significant differences were evident between the two groups of respondents on six decision items regarding the preferred locus of control. On these decisions, the mean scores of respondents with a graduate degree were significantly higher than those of respondents with a bachelor's degree or less. The more-educated respondents preferred greater decentralization over these decisions than did the less-educated respondents.

On thirty-four of the forty decision items regarding the preferred locus of control, however, there were no significant differences on the basis of formal education. Still, these findings suggest that formal education is mildly related to the perceived locus of preferred control over educational decisions.

Position

How is position related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 5.06 presents the statistically

Table 5.05

Comparison of Mean Locus of Control Scores by Formal Education

Category Item No.	Type	N	Group 1 (bachelor or less) 2 (graduate)	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	t value	Groups
S-21	IS	28	1	10.1	4.2	-3.11**	2>1
		49	2	12.8	2.0		
F-3	SH	21	1	4.6	1.7	-3.17**	2>1
		53	2	6.4	2.4		
C-5	SH	21	1	5.3	1.1	-2.71**	2>1
		53	2	6.3	2.2		
E-9	SH	21	1	4.2	5.1	-2.35*	2>1
		53	2	7.6	5.8		
S-22	SH	21	1	9.0	3.6	-3.32**	2>1
		53	2	11.8	3.1		
N-33	SH	21	1	6.5	3.5	-2.84**	2>1
		53	2	9.1	3.5		
N-34	SH	21	1	6.3	3.1	-2.02*	2>1
		53	2	8.0	3.5		

** Significant at .01 level
* Significant at .05 level

Table 5.06

Comparison of Mean Locus of Control Scores

by Position

Category Item No.	Type	N	Trust. 1	C.O. 2	Prin. 3	F	Groups
F-1	IS	77	5.2	6.7	7.0	3.5^{*}	2,3>1
F-3	IS	77	5.5	5.9	8.0	9.6^{**}	3>2,1
C-8	IS	77	3.4	5.1	4.8	4.0^{*}	2,3>1
E-10	IS	77	5.1	6.1	6.8	4.1^{*}	3>1
I-16	IS	76	6.6	5.8	10.3	23.8^{***}	3>2,1
S-21	IS	77	9.2	11.5	3.3	9.5^{***}	1,2>3; 2>1
S-22	IS	76	8.5	11.3	11.8	4.1^{*}	2,3>1
R-30	IS	77	6.9	10.3	9.7	5.0^{**}	2,3>1
R-32	IS	77	6.5	6.6	8.5	3.9^{*}	3>2
N-33	IS	77	5.3	7.0	9.5	10.7^{***}	3>2,1
N-34	IS	77	5.7	6.2	8.6	6.6^{**}	3>2,1
N-35	IS	77	5.1	6.1	8.6	11.5^{***}	3>2,1
N-36	IS	77	5.2	6.3	8.2	11.2^{***}	3>2,1
C-5	SH	75	4.9	5.7	6.8	5.6^{**}	3>2,1
E-12	SH	75	10.5	12.0	12.5	3.3^{*}	3>1
I-16	SH	75	7.6	6.1	7.9	3.8^{*}	3>2
P-17	SH	72	5.7	7.6	7.9	6.9^{**}	2,3>1
P-18	SH	75	10.7	12.3	12.4	7.7^{***}	2,3>1
O-25	SH	75	8.0	10.2	10.4	5.0^{**}	2,3>1
R-29	SH	75	10.2	13.2	13.2	9.0^{***}	2,3>1
N-34	SH	75	5.5	6.5	9.5	11.1^{***}	3>2,1
N-35	SH	75	5.0	6.3	7.6	4.5^{*}	3>1

*** Significant at .001 level
** Significant at .01 level
* Significant at .05 level

significant differences in the locus of control scores by position. As indicated in Table 5.06, significant differences were evident among various groups on thirteen decision items regarding the perceived locus of actual control, and on nine items regarding the locus of preferred control.

For example, on item one (finance to a school, F-1), the mean scores of principals and central office administrators were significantly higher than those of trustees. Both principals and central office administrators perceived that greater decentralization existed on this decision than was perceived to exist by trustees.

On all thirteen decision items pertaining to the perceived locus of actual control, the mean scores of principals were significantly higher than those of central office administrators and trustees. Principals perceived that greater decentralization existed on these decisions than did central office administrators and trustees. On five decisions, however, central office administrators perceived greater decentralization than did trustees (finance to a school, special schools, student conduct, student reporting, and community use of a school). That trustees perceived significantly higher centralization than either central office administrators or principals, may suggest that trustees perceived they had greater control over educational decisions than was actually the case.

Of particular interest, in one decision category (new programs), the mean locus of control scores on all four of the decision items (N-33-36) were related to the position of the respondent. These findings suggest that decisions concerning new programs may be difficult to make because various groups (trustees, central office administrators and principals) appear to have significantly different perceptions about the perceived locus of actual control over such decisions. On these decisions, disagreement among stakeholder groups appeared to exist about, "Who should make the decision?"

On twenty-seven of the forty decision items regarding the actual locus of control, however, there were no significant differences on the basis of position. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that position is strongly related to perceptions regarding the actual locus of control over educational decisions.

On all nine decision items regarding the preferred locus of control, the mean scores of principals were higher than those of central office administrators and trustees. Principals preferred greater decentralization on these decisions than did central office administrators or trustees. Only on four decision items, however, did central office administrators prefer greater decentralization than trustees (selection of a principal, selection of a teacher, number of teachers and parental involvement). On all but one decision identified (program evaluation policies, I-16), trustees preferred significantly greater centralization than did either central office administrators or principals. Conversely, principals preferred greater decentralization than did the other two groups. On three decisions, principals preferred greater decentralization than did central office administrators (building changes, program evaluation policies and continuation of a pilot).

On thirty-one of the forty decision items, however, there were no significant differences among various groups regarding the locus of preferred control. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that position is moderately related to the locus of preferred control over educational decisions. However, these findings might well have been affected by the interrelationships among position and three other variables: gender, years in present position and formal education.

Number of Years in Present Position

How is the number of years in a position related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 5.07 presents the statistically significant differences in the locus of control scores by number of years in a position. As indicated in Table 5.07, significant differences were evident on two decision items regarding the actual locus of control.

Table 5.07

Comparison of Mean Locus of Control Scores by Number of Years in a Position

Category Item No.	Type	N	1 (1-2)	2 (3-4)	3 (5-6)	4 (7+)	F	Groups
C- 7	IS	75	9.7	9.2	7.1	6.2	4.9**	1,2>4
E- 9	IS	75	5.2	9.2	4.0	6.1	4.2**	2>3
F- 1	SH	74	7.1	7.1	7.9	6.0	3.5*	3>4
F- 3	SH	74	5.1	6.6	6.9	5.2	3.4*	3>1
E-11	SH	74	9.9	12.5	12.2	11.2	3.0*	2>1
P-17	SH	71	6.8	8.1	8.1	6.7	3.0*	2,3>4

** Significant at .01 level
* Significant at .05 level

Regarding special features (C-7), the mean scores of respondents in their first or second year (group 1) were significantly higher on decentralization than those of respondents seven or more years in a position. The mean scores of respondents in their third or fourth year (group 2) were significantly higher on decentralization than those of respondents seven or more years in a position on the first decision (special features, C-7), and those of respondents five or six years in a position on the second decision (textbooks, E-9).

Concerning special features (C-7), respondents in their third or fourth year in a position perceived greater decentralization than did those seven or more years in a position. Also, on this decision respondents in their first or second year in a position perceived greater decentralization than did those seven or more years in a position. Regarding textbooks (E-9), respondents in their third or fourth year in a position perceived greater decentralization than did those in their fifth or sixth year.

On thirty-eight of the forty decision items regarding the actual locus of control, however, there were no significant differences on the basis of the number of years in a position. These findings suggest that the number of years in a position is very weakly related to the perceived locus of actual control over educational decisions, if at all.

As indicated in Table 5.07, significant differences were evident on four decision items regarding the preferred locus of control. The mean scores of respondents in their fifth or sixth year (group 3) were significantly higher on decentralization than those of respondents seven or more years in a position regarding finance to a school, (F-1). On this decision, the former preferred greater decentralization than did the latter.

With respect to the finance of new programs (F-3) and the selection of a principal (P-17), there were significant differences in the locus of control scores. On major equipment (E-11), the mean scores of respondents in their third or fourth year in a position were significantly higher on decentralization than those of respondents in their first or second year. On this decision, respondents in their third or fourth year in a position preferred greater decentralization than did those in their first or second year.

On thirty-six of the forty decision items regarding the preferred locus of control, however, there were no significant differences on the basis of the number of years in a position. Notwithstanding, these findings suggest that the number of years in a position is weakly related to the locus of preferred control over educational decisions.

Years of Administrative Experience

How is administrative experience related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 5.08 presents the statistically significant differences in the locus of control scores by years of administrative experience of central office administrators and principals. As indicated in Table 5.08, significant differences were evident among various groups on two decision items regarding the actual locus of control.

Regarding finance in a school (F-2), the mean scores were significantly different between two groups on the basis of years of administrative experience. On the selection of a principal (P-17), the mean scores of administrators with 21-35 years of administrative experience were significantly higher on decentralization than those of administrators with 17-20 years of administrative experience. The former group perceived that greater decentralization existed on this decision than was perceived to exist by the latter.

On thirty-eight of the forty decision items regarding the actual locus of control, however, there were no significant differences among various groups. These findings suggest that years of administrative experience is very weakly related to perceptions regarding the actual locus of control over educational decisions, if at all.

As indicated in Table 5.08, a significant difference was evident among various groups of respondents on one decision item regarding the preferred locus of control. On this decision, the mean scores of respondents with 17-20 years of administrative experience were

Table 5.08

Comparison of Mean Locus of Control Scores by

Years of Aministrative Experience

Category Item No.	Type	N	1 (1-12)	2 (13-16)	3 (17-20)	4 (21-35)	F	Groups
F-2	IS	64	12.7	13.7	13.3	12.5	2.9*	2>4
P-17	IS	64	6.8	7.3	6.1	8.4	3.2*	4>3
O-26	SH	61	12.8	13.9	13.5	13.2	5.1*	3,2>1

* Significant at .05 level

significantly higher on decentralization than those of respondents with 1-12 years of administrative experience. In addition, the perceptions of respondents with 13-16 years of administrative experience were significantly higher on decentralization than those of respondents with 1-12 years of administrative experience. Administrators who had 13-20 years of administrative experience preferred greater decentralization than those with less than 13 years of experience regarding the school timetable.

On thirty-nine of the forty decision items regarding the preferred locus of control, however, there were no significant differences among various groups. These findings suggest that years of administrative experience is very weakly related to the locus of preferred control over educational decisions, if at all.

School District

Respondents were drawn from four large, urban school districts in Alberta. To what extent are perceived differences in the actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions related to the school district of the respondent?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 5.09 presents the statistically significant differences in the locus of control scores by school district.

As indicated in Table 5.09, significant differences were evident among various groups on nine decision items regarding the perceived locus of actual control. The nine decisions represented the following five decision categories: (1) equipment, supplies and services; (2) personnel management; (3) organizational structure; (4) finance and budgeting; and (5) curriculum and instruction. The locus of control scores on three decisions in the equipment, supplies and services category were related to the school district. Mean scores in District A were significantly higher on decentralization than those in District B on textbooks (E-9) and major equipment (E-11) and also higher on decentralization than those in District C regarding classroom furnishings (E-12).

Table 5.09

Comparison of Mean Locus of Control Scores by School District

Category Item No.	Type	N	A 1	B 2	C 3	D 4	F	Groups
F- 2	IS	77	13.6	13.2	13.1	12.1	3.8*	A>D
E- 9	IS	77	8.8	4.7	5.1	6.3	2.8*	A>B
E-11	IS	77	11.8	8.1	10.9	9.0	4.7**	A>B
E-12	IS	75	12.7	10.4	9.6	11.8	4.2**	A>C
I-13	IS	76	14.6	13.4	14.5	14.9	4.1*	A,D>B
P-17	IS	77	6.0	6.7	7.4	8.5	7.1***	C,D>A; D>B
P-18	IS	77	12.4	10.8	10.1	11.4	6.0***	A>B,C
O-25	IS	77	12.0	7.6	8.3	8.4	25.9***	A>B,C,D
O-28	IS	76	10.9	7.2	9.8	6.7	9.8***	A>B,D; C>B,D
E- 9	SH	75	7.8	3.6	6.9	8.8	2.8*	D>B
P-18	SH	75	12.6	12.1	11.2	12.3	3.4*	A>C
S-23	SH	75	12.5	10.3	12.7	11.5	3.6*	A,C>B
O-25	SH	75	11.9	9.7	8.4	8.8	11.9***	A>B,C,D
O-28	SH	74	11.5	8.2	7.9	7.5	8.2***	A>B,C,D
R-30	SH	74	11.0	8.8	8.4	9.1	2.9*	A>C
N-34	SH	75	5.8	7.3	8.4	9.5	4.7**	C,D>A

*** Significant at .001 level
** Significant at .01 level
* Significant at .05 level

In the personnel management category, mean scores on the locus of actual control in Districts C and D on the selection of a principal (P-17) were significantly higher on decentralization than those in District A. In addition, District D scores were also significantly higher on decentralization than those in District B. Conversely, with respect to the selection of a teacher (P-18), scores in District A were significantly higher on decentralization than those in either District B or C.

Although District A was perceived to be more decentralized with respect to equipment, supplies and services, it was perceived to be more centralized with respect to one item in the personnel management category (the selection of a principal). In the organizational structure category, mean scores on the perceived actual locus of control in District A were significantly higher on decentralization than those in at least two other districts.

Overall, regarding the actual locus of control, District A was perceived to be more decentralized on four of the five decision categories identified than were one or more of the other districts. These findings were not surprising since District A adopted school-based budgeting some years ago, and more recently, adopted school-based staffing. In sharp contrast, District B, one of the smallest districts, was more centralized on decisions in four of the categories: (1) equipment, supplies and services; (2) curriculum and instruction; (3) personnel management; and (4) organizational structure.

On thirty-one of the forty decision items regarding the perceived locus of actual control, however, there were no significant differences among school districts. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that the school district is moderately related to perceptions of the actual locus of control over educational decisions.

As indicated in Table 5.09, significant differences were evident among various groups on seven decision items on the locus of preferred control. These decision items represented the following six decision categories: (1) organizational structure; (2) equipment, supplies and services; (3) personnel management; (4) student management; (5) community relations; and (6) new programs. The locus of control scores on two decision items in the organizational structure category were influenced by the school district.

The mean scores in District A, on both decision items, were significantly higher on decentralization than in all other districts. These findings suggest that respondents in District A perceived greater decentralization over organizational structure than did respondents in other districts. On three other decisions, the mean scores in District A were significantly higher on decentralization than those of other districts (selection of a teacher, P-18; student reporting, S-23; and the community use of a school, R-30). Conversely, District A scores were significantly lower on decentralization than those in two other districts on one decision, the continuation of a pilot (N-34). These results suggest that respondents in District A preferred greater decentralization than respondents in other districts on matters concerning four decision categories. Less decentralization, however, was preferred with respect to one decision in the new programs category.

Respondents in District B preferred less decentralization than did other respondents over at least one decision in each of three categories: (1) equipment, supplies and services; (2) student management; and (3) organizational structure. In addition, respondents in District C also preferred less decentralization over at least one decision in each of three categories: (1) personnel management; (2) organizational structure; and (3) community relations.

On thirty-three of the forty decision items regarding the locus of preferred control, however, there were no significant differences among school districts. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that the school district is mildly related to the locus of preferred control over educational decisions.

Type of School

How is the type of school related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 5.10 presents the statistically significant differences in the locus of control scores by type of school.

There were no significant differences among various groups on any of the forty decision items regarding the perceived locus of actual control. These findings suggest that the type of school is not related to perceptions of the locus of actual control over educational decisions.

As indicated in Table 5.10, however, a significant difference was evident between two of the groups on one decision item regarding the locus of preferred control. Regarding class size, the mean scores of principals of elementary-junior high schools were significantly higher than those of principals of senior high schools. Elementary-junior high principals preferred greater decentralization on this decision than did principals of senior high schools.

However, on thirty-nine of the forty decision items regarding the locus of preferred control, there were no significant differences among various groups. These findings suggest that the type of school is very weakly related to the locus of preferred control over educational decisions, if at all.

Size of School

How is the size of a school related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 5.11 presents the statistically significant differences in the locus of control scores by size of school.

As indicated in Table 5.11, a significant difference was evident among various groups on one decision item regarding the perceived locus of actual control. Concerning transportation, the mean scores of principals of schools with an enrolment of 301 to 400 students were significantly higher than those of principals of schools with an enrolment of up to 300 students or 401 to 1000 students. The former group of principals perceived greater decentralization regarding transportation than did the latter.

Table 5.10

Comparison of Mean Locus of Control Scores by Type of School

Category Item No.	Type	N	1 Elem.	2 J.H.	3 S.H.	4 Elem.-J.H.	F	Groups
O-28	SH	31	9.9	9.6	6.5	11.0	3.2*	4>3

* Significant at .05 level

Table 5.11

Comparison of Mean Locus of Control Scores
by Size of School

Category Item No.	Type	N	1 0-300	2 301-400	3 401-1000	4 1001+	F	Groups
E-10	IS	29	5.7	8.3	6.1	6.3	4.4*	2>1,3

* Significant at .05 level

A possible explanation for these findings might be that schools with 301 to 400 students were large elementary schools, which attracted enough students to allow for the contracting of special buses, in addition to the use of regular transit service. On the other hand, small schools with 300 or less students may not have qualified for special busing or may have served small communities, where busing was not required. Large schools with 401 to 1000 students, however, were probably junior high or senior high schools, which generally operate under different transportation guidelines.

However, on thirty-nine of the forty decision items regarding the perceived locus of actual control, there were no significant differences among various groups. These findings suggest that the size of a school is very weakly related to the perceptions of principals regarding the actual locus of control over educational decisions, if at all.

On all forty decision items regarding the locus of preferred control, however, there were no significant differences among various groups of principals. These findings suggest that the size of a school is not related to the preferences of principals regarding the locus of control over educational decisions.

C. SUMMARY

This chapter presented analyses of perceptions regarding the actual and preferred locus of control over various decision items. The relationships of various background characteristics to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control were also examined.

The results indicated that there were no significant differences between perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control in a large majority of the decision categories. However, significant differences were evident between mean scores on the perceived locus of actual and preferred control in three decision categories: capital expenditures; equipment, supplies and services and personnel management. In these decision areas, trustees and administrators favored greater decentralization than was perceived to exist at the time of the study.

In summary, trustees and administrators expressed no desire for greater centralization over educational decisions. Conversely, they expressed a need for greater decentralization over economic and personnel matters. In most decision areas, however, trustees and administrators expressed no preference for greater or lesser decentralization. These findings suggest that the status quo was largely acceptable with respect to the perceived locus of actual and preferred control over most decisions.

Relationship of background variables. Of the nine background variables examined, most were mildly or moderately related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control. The strongest relationships pertained to position, school district and gender. Age, formal education and number of years in a position were somewhat related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control. The relationship of gender, number of years in a position, and formal education to position may have influenced the relationship of these variables to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control. The three weakest relationships pertained to years of administrative experience, type and size of school. Some interaction among the interrelated variables might have been a factor in these results. In other words, there may have been some contamination in the findings, resulting from the interaction of one or more independent variables.

Chapter VI

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION OF CONTROL

This chapter presents the results of the analyses of the perceived influence of selected factors on the level of centralization and decentralization of control. The respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions of the degree of decentralizing or centralizing influence on decision making which was exerted in Alberta by selected factors. The relation of various background characteristics to the influence of selected factors is also examined in this chapter.

A. PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SELECTED FACTORS

The following sub-problem is addressed in the first part of this chapter:

Sub-Problem 10. What factors contribute to changes in the perceived locus of control in the educational system?

In all, sixteen major factors frequently identified in the literature were examined. These were as follows: (1) education department policy; (2) current practices in administration; (3) pressure from the teachers' association; (4) provincial legislation; (5) pressure for public accountability; (6) current political climate; (7) pressure from the trustees' association; (8) current economic climate; (9) multiculturalism policy; (10) pressure for minority rights; (11) pressure from science and technology; (12) school board policy; (13) social and cultural mores; (14) personal philosophy; (15) pressure for human rights; and (16) moral and ethical standards. In addition, respondents were asked to identify other important centralizing and decentralizing factors.

Each respondent was asked to indicate on a seven-point scale the degree of influence of each factor. The scale ranged from one (strong decentralization) to seven (strong centralization). A rating of four indicated balanced forces; that is, the degree of decentralizing or centralizing influence was considered to be equal or balanced on decision making.

For the purpose of this study, decision making was considered to become more decentralized, if control over decisions moved in the direction as follows: province → district → school → classroom (policy maker → administrator → practitioner). However, it was considered to be more centralized, if control over decision making moved in the opposite direction.

Table 6.01 presents the mean scores on each factor in rank order from the combined responses of the total sample. The two factors with the highest mean scores (most centralized) were provincial legislation and education department policy. These factors, located within a range of 5.6 to 6.5, had a moderate centralizing influence over educational decisions, according to respondents.

The next five factors in rank order, located within a range of 4.6 to 5.5, had a mild centralizing influence, according to respondents. Listed in descending order of centralizing influence, these factors were the following: (1) current political climate; (2) current economic climate; (3) pressure from teachers' association; (4) pressure from trustees' association; and (5) pressure for public accountability.

In contrast, the mean scores on eight of the sixteen factors were located within a range of 3.5 to 4.5 and therefore approximated balanced forces. The eight factors included: (1) pressure from science and technology; (2) pressure for minority rights; (3) pressure for human rights; (4) school board policy; (5) multiculturalism policy; (6) social and cultural mores; (7) moral and ethical standards; and (8) current practices in administration.

Lastly, the lowest-ranked mean score pertained to the personal philosophy of respondents. The mean score was within the range of 2.5 to 3.4. This result indicated that respondents perceived their personal philosophy to have a mild degree of decentralizing influence over educational decisions.

Discussion

The findings regarding provincial legislation and education department policy might be expected since education is constitutionally a provincial responsibility. In addition, prior to

Table 6.01

Influence of Selected Factors on the Locus of Control

Ranked by Mean Scores

N = 152

	Factor	Mean
1.	Provincial Legislation	5.9
2.	Education Department Policy	5.8
3.	Current Political Climate	5.1
4.	Current Economic Climate	4.9
5.5	Pressure from Teachers' Association	4.8
5.5	Pressure from Trustees' Association	4.8
7.	Pressure for Public Accountability	4.6
8.	Pressure from Science and Technology	4.5
9.	Pressure for Minority Rights	4.4
10.5	Pressure for Human Rights	4.3
10.5	School Board Policy	4.3
12.	Multiculturalism Policy	4.1
14.	Social and Cultural Mores	3.9
14.	Moral and Ethical Standards	3.9
14.	Current Practices in Administration	3.9
16.	Personal Philosophy	2.8

the time of this study, the Management and Finance Plan (1984) had been implemented by the provincial government, while the School Act and Secondary Education were under review.

At the time of this study, Alberta was in the midst of a severe economic recession. Fiscal and budgetary restraint was the order of the day in the spring of 1985. Thus, it was not surprising that the results indicated that the political and economic climates had a mild centralizing influence.

Consistent with the political and economic forces of the day, pressures were also being exerted by the teachers' association, the trustees' association and by the public for greater accountability. Although these pressures also had a mild centralizing influence, it is doubtful they were all pushing in the same direction. For instance, during the spring of 1985, the trustees' association was calling for lower teacher salary increases, even salary cuts, while the teachers' association was demanding increases comparable to increases in the cost-of-living index. In retrospect, the pressure for greater public accountability likely contributed in part to the implementation of the Management and Finance Plan (1984). The plan largely brought about a strong emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of personnel (students, teachers, administrators), programs, schools and school districts.

The findings regarding the eight factors which approximated balanced forces suggest that none of the factors exerted much centralizing or decentralizing influence. This does not imply that these factors were not important to the decision-making process. For example, school board policy would have been very important to the school administrator, even though it was not identified as having any centralizing or decentralizing influence.

Of the sixteen variables, personal philosophy was the only factor which had a decentralizing influence, according to respondents. These findings indicate that trustees and administrators perceived that seven factors had a centralizing effect on educational decisions, while only one factor had a decentralizing effect.

Other Important Centralizing and Decentralizing Factors

This section presents the analyses of responses to the following open-ended questions:

1. List any other centralizing factors which you consider important, but were not included in the above.

2. List any other decentralizing factors which you consider important, but were not included in the above.

Other centralizing factors identified included four categories: finance, provincial or local policies, pressure groups and miscellaneous factors. Financing of education was identified by four respondents. The following provincial or local policies were also identified: the provincial government's constitutional responsibility for education, provincial evaluation policies, teacher certification and evaluation, diploma exams, teacher-hiring practices and allocation of professional staff. The following types of pressure groups were identified: minority groups, parent-advisory groups and single-issue groups. Lastly, miscellaneous factors included limited resources, unemployment, the judicial system, religious leaders, the desire to avoid accountability and high technology. In summary, the most common additional centralizing factors identified referred to finance, public policies and pressure groups.

Other decentralizing factors identified also included four categories: parent or special-interest groups, finance and budgeting, political factors and societal or other forces. Parent or special-interest groups were identified by five respondents. The factors related to finance and budgeting were block funding, Management and Finance Plan, school fund-raising, financial decisions, and school-based budgeting. Political factors identified included: local autonomy, local political pressure and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Lastly, respondents identified the following societal or other forces: complexity of society, information society, consumerism, high technology, philosophy of decentralization, minority-language pressure, principals' association, professionalism, children's needs and male-female sexism. In summary, the most common additional decentralizing factors identified referred to special-interest groups, finance, political factors and societal forces.

Overall, similar categories were identified to have either a centralizing or decentralizing influence on educational decisions.

B. BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

The following sub-problem is addressed in this part of the chapter:

Sub-Problem 12. To what extent do differences exist regarding the perceived influence of various factors on the basis of the following background characteristics of respondents: (1) gender; (2) age; (3) formal education; (4) position; (5) number of years in a position; (6) years of administrative experience; (7) school district; (8) type of school; and (9) size of school?

Thus, nine background characteristics or variables were examined to determine their relationship to the mean influence scores on each of the sixteen factors. For analyzing demographic data, the responses of the total sample were combined. Since some background characteristics were interrelated, as reported in Chapter 5, the succeeding analyses might have been affected to some extent by the interaction of one or more independent variables.

Gender

How is gender related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors?

A two-tailed t test for independent samples was used to analyze the mean differences between the male and female respondents. Table 6.02 presents the statistically significant differences in the mean influence scores by gender. As indicated in Table 6.02, significant differences were evident on mean influence scores between male and female respondents on two factors. On both factors, the mean influence scores for females were significantly higher than for males. Thus, females perceived that social and cultural mores and the pressure for human rights had a greater centralizing influence than did males.

Table 6.02

Comparison of Mean Influence Scores

by Gender

Factor	N	Group	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	t value	Groups
Pressure for Human Rights	21	1(F)	5.0	1.6	2.11*	1>2
	126	2(M)	4.2	1.6		
Social and Cultural Mores	21	1(F)	4.5	1.5	2.08*	1>2
	123	2(M)	3.8	1.4		

* Significant at .05 level

On fourteen of the sixteen factors, however, no significant differences on mean influence scores between males and females were evident. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that gender is weakly related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of factors examined in this study. Since gender was related to both position and formal education, the strength of this relationship might have been even weaker than indicated by these results.

Age

How is age related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 6.03 presents the statistically significant differences in the mean influence scores by age.

As indicated in Table 6.03, a significant difference was evident on mean influence scores among various age groups of respondents on only one factor. On this factor, the mean influence score of respondents aged 51 or older was significantly higher than for those aged 40 or younger. Thus, older respondents perceived that pressure from science and technology had a greater centralizing influence than did younger respondents. This finding might be expected as older people might be somewhat threatened by scientific and technological change.

On fifteen of the sixteen factors, however, no significant differences among various groups were evident. These findings suggest that age is very weakly related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of factors examined in this study, if at all.

Formal Education

How is formal education related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors?

Table 6.03

Comparison of Mean Influence Scores by Age

Factor	N	Group 1(40 or <) 2(41-50) 3(51+)	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	F	Groups
Pressure from Science and Technology	15	1	3.9	1.4	4.14*	3>1
	72	2	4.4	1.2		
	58	3	4.8	1.2		

* Significant at .05 level

A two-tailed t test for independent samples was used to analyze the mean differences between two groups of respondents, those with a bachelor's degree or less and those with a graduate degree. Table 6.04 presents the statistically significant differences in the mean influence scores by formal education. As indicated in Table 6.04, significant differences were evident on mean influence scores between respondents with a bachelor's degree or less and those with a graduate degree on three factors.

Regarding provincial legislation, the mean influence score of respondents with a graduate degree was significantly higher than for respondents with a bachelor's degree or less. Thus, respondents with a graduate degree perceived that provincial legislation had a greater centralizing influence than did respondents with a bachelor's degree or less.

With respect to social and cultural mores, and personal philosophy, the mean influence scores of respondents with a bachelor's degree or less were significantly higher than for respondents with a graduate degree. Thus, less-educated respondents perceived that social and cultural mores and personal philosophy had a greater centralizing influence than did more-educated respondents.

A possible explanation of the results on provincial legislation may be that more-educated respondents, who perceived their personal philosophy to have a mildly decentralizing influence, were less satisfied with the centralizing influence of provincial legislation than less-educated respondents. Regarding social and cultural mores, it may be that less-educated persons may be more aware of, or sensitive to the influence of social and cultural mores than more-educated respondents. Conversely, highly-educated individuals may be less subject to group pressures than those with less education.

On thirteen of the sixteen factors, however, no significant differences among the two groups were evident. Still, these findings suggest that formal education is moderately related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of factors examined in this study.

Table 6.04

Comparison of Mean Influence Scores by Formal Education

Factor	N	Group 1 (bach. or less) 2 (grad.)	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	t value	Groups
Provincial Legislation	47	1	5.4	1.9	-2.49*	2>1
	101	2	6.1	1.3		
Social and Cultural Mores	46	1	4.4	1.4	2.80**	1>2
	97	2	3.6	1.4		
Personal Philosophy	47	1	3.4	1.6	3.15**	1>2
	100	2	2.6	1.3		

** Significant at .01 level
* Significant at .05 level

Position

How is position related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 6.05 presents the statistically significant differences in the mean influence scores by position.

As indicated in Table 6.05, significant differences on mean influence scores were evident among various groups (trustees, central office administrators and principals) on six factors. On the first five factors listed, the principals' mean scores were significantly higher than at least one of the other groups. Regarding current practices in administration and personal philosophy, trustees' mean scores were significantly higher than those of central office administrators. Finally, concerning pressure from the trustees' association, central office administrators' mean scores were significantly higher than those of trustees.

These findings suggest that the principal's preference for greater decentralization may have been curtailed by factors such as provincial legislation, education department policy, pressure from the trustees' association, school board policy and current practices in administration. Similarly, the central office administrator's preference for greater decentralization may have been curtailed by pressure from the trustees' association.

On ten of the factors, however, no significant differences among various groups were evident. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that position is strongly related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of factors examined in this study. However, these findings might well have been affected by the interaction among position and three other variables: gender, years in present position and formal education.

Number of Years in a Position

How is the number of years in a position related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors?

Table 6.05

Comparison of Mean Influence Scores by Position

Factor	N	Group	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	F	Groups
Provincial Legislation	25	Trus.	5.2	2.0	3.9•	3>1
	64	C.O.	5.8	1.3		
	60	Prin.	6.2	1.4		
Education Department Policy	25	Trus.	5.2	2.2	3.4•	3>1
	63	C.O.	5.7	1.6		
	60	Prin.	6.1	1.4		
Pressure from Trustees' Association	25	Trus.	3.8	1.5	9.2•	3>1; 2>1
	63	C.O.	4.8	1.3		
	59	Prin.	5.2	1.4		
School Board Policy	25	Trus.	4.2	1.5	6.9•	3>2
	64	C.O.	3.8	1.8		
	58	Prin.	5.0	1.6		
Current Practices in Administration	24	Trus.	4.5	1.4	5.2•	1>2; 3>2
	63	C.O.	3.4	1.8		
	59	Prin.	4.2	1.7		
Personal Philosophy	24	Trus.	3.5	1.4	5.1•	1>2
	64	C.O.	2.5	1.3		
	60	Prin.	3.0	1.6		

• Significant at .05 level

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 6.06 presents the statistically significant difference in the mean influence scores by number of years in a position. As indicated in Table 6.06, a significant difference on mean influence scores among groups of respondents of varying years in a position was evident on only one factor.

On this factor, the mean scores of respondents who had been in their position for more than six years were significantly higher than those of respondents who had been in their position for less than three years. Thus, respondents who had more than six years of experience in their position perceived that the pressure for minority rights had a greater centralizing influence than did respondents with less than three years of experience in their position.

This finding suggests that the longer an individual stays in an educational position the greater is the chance that the individual might be either less tolerant of, or more threatened by, minority rights. Possibly, less tolerance or fear of threat may be the result of greater security in a position and increasing desire for autonomy. On the contrary, individuals educated more recently might be more tolerant of, or less threatened by, minority rights than respondents educated some years ago.

On fifteen of the sixteen factors, however, no significant differences were evident among various groups. These findings suggest that the number of years in a position is very weakly related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of factors examined in this study, if at all.

Years of Administrative Experience

How is the number of years of administrative experience related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the

Table 6.06

Comparison of Mean Influence Scores by Number of Years in a Position

Factor	N	Group	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	F	Groups
Pressure for Minority Rights	32	1(1-2)	3.7	1.8	2.69*	4>1
	37	2(3-4)	4.3	1.4		
	35	3(5-6)	4.5	1.6		
	40	4(7+)	4.8	1.9		

* Significant at .05 level

significance of differences among various groups.

The results indicated that no significant differences were evident among various groups on any of the sixteen factors. These findings suggest that years of administrative experience is not related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of factors examined in this study.

School District

How is school district related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 6.07 presents the statistically significant differences in the mean influence scores by school district. As indicated in Table 6.07, significant differences were evident on mean influence scores among various school districts on four factors.

On these factors, all of the significant differences pertained to School District A and one or more of the other districts. The results on the current political climate indicated that mean scores for District D were significantly higher than for District A. Regarding pressure for public accountability, mean scores for Districts B and D were significantly higher than for District A. With respect to school board policy, mean scores for Districts B, C and D were significantly higher than for District A. Thus, respondents from District A perceived a lower centralizing influence by the four factors than did respondents from one or more of the other districts.

On twelve of the sixteen factors, however, no significant differences among various groups were evident. Notwithstanding, these findings suggest that school district is strongly related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of factors examined in this study.

Table 6.07

Comparison of Mean Influence Scores by School District

Factor	N	Group	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	F	Groups
Current Political Climate	47	A	4.6	1.6	3.0*	D>A
	35	B	5.3	1.7		
	37	C	5.2	1.6		
	28	D	5.7	1.3		
Pressure for Public Accountability	46	A	3.9	1.7	4.9**	B>A; D>A
	35	B	5.2	2.0		
	37	C	4.6	1.6		
	29	D	5.2	1.5		
School Board Policy	47	A	3.4	1.9	8.4***	C>A; B>A; D>A
	35	B	4.8	1.4		
	36	C	4.6	1.5		
	29	D	5.0	1.5		
Current Practices in Administration	44	A	3.0	1.6	8.1***	B>A; C>A; D>A
	35	B	3.9	1.6		
	38	C	4.4	1.6		
	29	D	4.6	1.6		

*** Significant at .001 level
** Significant at .01 level
* Significant at .05 level

Type of School

How is the type of school related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. Table 6.08 presents the statistically significant differences in the mean influence scores by type of school. As indicated in Table 6.08, significant differences were evident on mean influence scores among various groups on three factors.

Regarding the current economic climate, the mean scores of senior high principals were significantly higher than those of elementary-junior high principals. A possible explanation might be that senior high schools may be more affected by changing economic conditions than are elementary-junior high schools, which may in turn influence the perceptions of senior high principals. For example, young people may return to high school during times of economic recession, when jobs are scarce.

With respect to pressure for human rights, the mean scores of senior high principals were significantly higher than those of elementary-junior high principals. A possible explanation might be that senior high principals may be more sensitive to the pressure for human rights, because the issue might be highly relevant to high school students and may get considerable attention in the high school curriculum.

Concerning moral and ethical standards, the perceptions of junior high principals were significantly higher than those of elementary principals. A possible explanation might be that junior high principals may be highly aware of moral and ethical standards, because of the nature of their work with young adolescents.

On thirteen of the sixteen factors, however, no significant differences among various groups were evident. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that the type of school is moderately related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of factors examined in this study.

Table 6.08

Comparison of Mean Influence Scores
by Type of School

Factor	N	Group	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	F	Groups
Current Economic Climate	13	1(Elem.)	4.7	1.9	4.0*	3>4
	15	2(J.H.)	4.9	1.4		
	15	3(S.H.)	5.9	1.3		
	16	4(E.+J.H.)	4.1	1.3		
Pressure for Human Rights	13	1	4.0	1.8	3.6*	3>4
	15	2	4.3	1.6		
	15	3	5.4	1.5		
	16	4	3.7	1.2		
Moral and Ethical Standards	13	1	3.2	1.7	3.1*	2>1
	15	2	4.8	1.3		
	16	3	4.1	1.8		
	16	4	3.5	1.1		

* Significant at .05 level

Size of School

How is the size of a school related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the mean scores, while the Scheffe' procedure was used to determine the significance of differences among various groups. The results indicated that no significant differences among various groups were evident on any of the sixteen factors. These findings suggest that the size of a school is not related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of factors examined in this study.

C. SUMMARY

In summary, the results indicated that two variables had a moderate centralizing influence over educational decisions: education department policy and provincial legislation. In addition, five variables had a mild centralizing influence: pressure from the teachers' association, pressure for public accountability, current political climate, pressure from the trustees' association and the current economic climate. Variables which had little or no perceived influence on control over educational decisions included the following: current practices in administration, moral and ethical standards, social and cultural mores, multiculturalism policy, school board policy, pressure for human rights, and pressure for minority rights. Only one variable, personal philosophy, had a mild decentralizing influence over educational decisions, according to the results of this study.

Relationship of background variables. Of the nine background variables examined, most were mildly or moderately related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors. Four of the variables, which were moderately related to perceptions included position, school district, formal education and type of school. Gender was mildly related to perceptions, while four variables were very weakly related or not related to perceptions of centralizing or decentralizing influence (age, number of years in a position, years of administrative experience and size of school). However, there may have been some contamination in these findings, resulting from the influence of one or more interrelated variables.

Chapter VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study, including a statement of the research problem, an outline of the methodology and the major findings. The conclusions are presented, followed by a discussion of the implications for practice, research and theory. The chapter ends with suggestions for further research, including a series of propositions.

A. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The Problem. This study examined the perceptions of control over educational decisions in four large, urban school districts in Alberta. The basic research problem was stated as follows: What are the perceptions of control over educational decisions across various levels?

The study was designed to examine four major aspects of the basic problem:

1. What is the perceived degree of actual control over educational decisions, exercised by persons working at various levels of the educational system (provincial, school board, superintendent, principal and teacher)?

2. What is the degree of preferred control over educational decisions at each level?

3. What is the perceived locus of actual and preferred control over educational decisions?

4. What factors contribute to changes in centralization or decentralization of control (locus of control)?

In addition, this study examined the relationship of various background characteristics to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control.

The conceptual framework of this study was based upon an open systems theory of organizations. Control was viewed as the output or end-result of power, authority and influence (Muth, 1984). The focal point in the study was on the locus of control across various levels of the educational system.

Methodology. A review of similar studies was conducted to determine the kinds and amount of data which might be gathered using a questionnaire (Chamberlain, 1975; Hoy & Sousa, 1984; March, 1981; Simpkins, 1968). A bank of possible questionnaire items was developed from the review of previous studies. Criteria for item selection, deletion or modification, included relevance, clarity and conciseness. Final selection and modification of items was carried out following a detailed pilot study. Data were gathered by means of two forms of a questionnaire during the spring of 1985 from trustees, senior administrators and principals from the four school districts.

In the first questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert-type scale which decision-making group(s) from the five organizational levels (teachers, principal's office, superintendent's office, school board and provincial education department) exercised major control (actual) over each decision item. The second questionnaire was similar, except it asked other respondents which group(s) from the five organizational levels should exercise major control (preferred) over each decision.

Ten categories of decisions were examined by the questionnaires: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) capital expenditures; (3) equipment, supplies and services; (4) curriculum and instruction; (5) personnel management; (6) student management; (7) organizational structure; (8) community relations; (9) implementation of new programs; and (10) policy making and decision making. Four decision items were selected for each category of decision, so that in all forty decision items were listed in the questionnaires.

In addition, both forms of the questionnaire examined centralizing and decentralizing factors, as perceived by the total sample of respondents. The sixteen major factors identified in the literature included: (1) education department policy; (2) current practices in administration; (3) pressure from the teachers' association; (4) provincial legislation; (5) pressure for public accountability; (6) current political climate; (7) pressure from the trustees' association; (8) current economic climate; (9) multiculturalism policy; (10) pressure for minority rights; (11) pressure from science and technology; (12) school board policy; (13) social and cultural mores; (14) personal philosophy; (15) pressure for human rights; and (16) moral and ethical standards.

The degree of influence of each factor was measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strong decentralization to strong centralization. In addition, two open-ended questions asked subjects to list other important decentralizing or centralizing factors. Finally, both questionnaires were used to gather data on demographic characteristics of respondents, including gender, age, formal education, position, years in present position, years of administrative experience (for administrators), school district and, regarding principals, the type and size of school.

A sample of 32 trustees, 77 central office administrators and 64 principals was selected. All trustees and central office administrators from the four school districts were included in the study. Stratified random samples of principals were selected for the study on the basis of the type of school (elementary, elementary-junior high, junior high and senior high). Four principals from each type of school in each school district were selected as participants. The respondents were randomly assigned to two subsets: members of one subset were asked to indicate their perceptions of the current or actual degree of control, while the members of the other subset were asked to indicate the preferred degree of control over educational decisions.

The Findings

Actual degree of control. The principal's office, the superintendent's office and the school board were perceived to have major or shared control over most decision categories. Teachers and the provincial education department were perceived to have the least overall control. These findings might be expected since the decision categories largely dealt with operational matters, mainly pertaining to local issues and matters of program and policy implementation.

Preferred degree of control. According to respondents, principals should have less control over the finance and budgeting category (additional finance). However, respondents felt that the principal's office should have more control over two decision categories: capital expenditures (building changes) and personnel management (selection of a teacher and teacher evaluation procedures). Respondents also felt that the school board should have more control over one decision category -- community relations, specifically the establishment of a school parent advisory committee.

Respondents felt that teachers should have more control over four decision categories: personnel management (teacher evaluation procedures), student management (student conduct), community relations (establishment of a parent advisory committee), and policy making and decision making (extent of teacher participation in decision making). Respondents also perceived that the provincial education department should have less control over three decision categories: finance and budgeting (finance to a school), capital expenditures (building changes, school closure) and equipment, supplies and services (major equipment).

In general, the status quo appeared to be acceptable to the respondents regarding three decision categories: curriculum and instruction, organizational structure and new programs. The greatest discrepancies between the perceived actual and preferred degree of control, however, were evident in four decision categories: finance and budgeting, capital expenditures, personnel management and community relations. Of particular interest, economic matters (finance and budgeting, and capital expenditures) were dominant areas of concern.

In summary, the principal's office, the superintendent's office and the school board were preferred to have major or shared control over most decision categories. Teachers and the provincial education department were preferred to have least overall control. Finally, it would appear that considerable satisfaction existed among trustees and administrators regarding their perceptions of the actual and preferred degree of control over educational decisions across various organizational levels.

Locus of control over educational decisions. The results indicated there were no significant differences between perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control in a large majority of the decision categories. However, significant differences were evident between perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control in three categories: capital expenditures; equipment, supplies and services and personnel management. In these decision areas, trustees and administrators favored greater decentralization than was perceived to exist at the time of the study.

In summary, trustees and administrators expressed no desire for greater centralization of control over educational decisions. Conversely, they expressed a need for greater decentralization over economic and personnel matters. In most decision areas, however, trustees and administrators expressed no preference for greater or lesser control. These findings suggest that the status quo was largely acceptable with respect to the actual and preferred locus of control over most decisions.

Overall, the results of this study indicated that there was a very high congruence between the actual and preferred locus of control over educational decisions. Apparently, an optimal level of control existed at various organizational levels with respect to most decision categories. The two most highly-centralized decision categories were capital expenditures and equipment, supplies and services. Conversely, the two most highly-decentralized decision categories were curriculum and instuction, and finance and budgeting.

Relationship of background variables. Of the nine background variables examined, most were mildly or moderately related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control. The strongest relationships pertained to position, school district and gender. Age, formal education and number of years in a position were mildly related to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control. The interaction among gender, number of years in a position, and formal education with position may have influenced the relationship of these variables to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control. Similarly, the relationship of age to administrative experience and type of school to size of school may also have influenced the relationship of these variables to perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control. The three weakest relationships pertained to years of administrative experience, type and size of school.

Factors contributing to centralization and decentralization of control. The perceived influence of selected factors on the level of centralization and decentralization of control was examined. Respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions of the degree of decentralizing or centralizing influence on decision making, which was exerted in Alberta by selected factors. In addition, the relationships between various background characteristics and the influence of selected factors were examined.

The results indicated that two variables contributed a moderate centralizing influence over educational decisions: education department policy and provincial legislation. In addition, five variables contributed a mild centralizing influence: pressure from the teachers' association, pressure for public accountability, current political climate, pressure from the trustees' association and the current economic climate. Variables which had little or no perceived influence on control over educational decisions included the following: current practices in administration, moral and ethical standards, social and cultural mores, multiculturalism policy, school board policy, pressure for human rights, and pressure for minority rights. Only one variable, personal philosophy, contributed a mild decentralizing influence over educational decisions, according to the results of this study.

Relationship of background variables. Of the nine background variables examined, most were mildly or moderately related to perceptions of the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors. Four of the variables, which were moderately related to perceptions, included position, school district, formal education and type of school. Gender was mildly related to perceptions, while four variables were very weakly related or not related to perceptions of centralizing or decentralizing influence (age, number of years in a position, years of administrative experience and size of school). However, some background characteristics were interrelated, so these findings might have been affected to some extent by the interaction of one or more independent variables.

B. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study served as the basis for drawing conclusions about centralization and decentralization of control, and the perceived degree of actual and preferred control over educational decisions.

Centralization and Decentralization of Control

This study was largely based on an open systems theory of decision making. Control over educational decisions was defined as the power, authority and influence required to make an actual decision. The concept of hierarchy of authority refers to the "extent to which the focus of decision making is prestructured by the formal authority system" (Hoy & Sousa, 1984:321). Power and influence, as viewed in the literature, flows from legitimate authority, providing such authority is exercised (Bacharach, 1981; Kelly, 1980; Scott, 1981; and Tannenbaum, 1968). In general, the conceptual framework of the study was useful and was largely supported by the findings.

In this study, the organizational levels which had formal or legal authority over specific decision categories generally were perceived to have major or shared control over decisions. Therefore, it was concluded that perceptions of the locus of control over educational decisions were congruent with the allocation of formal authority as specified by legislation, policies and regulations.

Perceived Degree and Locus of Control

The present study indicated that respondents were generally satisfied with the status quo regarding control over most decision areas. In fact, respondents perceived that few changes were necessary regarding control over educational decisions by the five organizational levels (provincial education department, school board, superintendent's office, principal's office and teachers).

Perceived control tended to be distributed consistently and evenly among various groups on a large number of decisions. Therefore, it was concluded that the distribution of control across organizational levels was characteristic of decision making in the school districts studied. It appeared that participation in decision making on a shared basis was desirable at various organizational levels. Increased participation in decision making could strengthen the commitment of members within an organization.

Discussion

Locus of control. The results of this study tend to confirm that major control over educational decisions was held by the principal's office. As predicted in the March study (1981) carried out in 1980, a shift in control to the principal's office apparently occurred, if the findings of this study are compared to the March findings. The March study examined the patterns of control over educational decisions in the four western Canadian provinces. Although the March study examined the perceptions of chief superintendents, this study examined the perceptions of senior administrators, in addition to chief superintendents, and the perceptions of trustees and principals.

What reasons might be advanced to explain the shift in the locus of control? The apparent shift in control might be attributed in part to the following: (1) Alberta Education initiatives (Management and Finance Plan, School Act Review); (2) collective action by school principals (administrators' associations); (3) scarcity of resources; (4) school board policy; and (5) the Keegstra affair.

In particular, provincial control over the major source of revenue of Alberta school boards (approximately 65-70 percent of their financial resources are derived from provincial grants), likely had a major impact, though indirectly, on local control over numerous decision areas. In reference to Pfeffer's work, Morgan (1986:16) described the relationship between power and control over financial resources:

> ... the use of such power is critically linked with one's ability to control the discretionary use of funds .... most of the financial resources available to an organization are committed to sustain current operations. Changes to these operations are usually incremental, decisions being made to increase or reduce current expenditure. It is the ability to increase or decrease this flow of funds that gives power.

In a time of scarce resources, it may well be prudent to pass on discretionary powers to lower organizational levels with a view to gaining greater efficiency and effectiveness. The delegation of authority also means that greater accountability may be expected.

However, there was little evidence in this study that teachers held a great deal of control over educational decisions. March had predicted that teachers would likely gain increased control during the period from 1980 to 1985. Still, respondents felt that teachers should have more control over several key decision categories including: personnel management, student management, community relations, and policy making and decision making. In this regard, the results of this study tend to support the findings of Chung (1985), who found that teachers desired greater decision-making authority over school matters. In addition, the results were consistent with the findings of Chamberlain (1975), Louden (1980) and Simpkins (1968) who found that teachers desired greater involvement in educational decision making.

March (1981) found that control over educational decisions was largely held by three levels: the school board, the principal's office and the superintendent's office. Although March did not rank the five levels according to overall degree of control, it would appear from his findings (1981:110) that the following rank order existed, using the procedure that was used to obtain the values presented in Table 4.12 of this study:

1. Superintendent's office (3.75)
2. Principal's office (3.72)
3. School board (3.41)
4. Teachers (2.44)
5. Provincial education department (1.69).

However, the findings of this study, carried out five years later (1985), indicated that major control over most decisions was perceived to be held, in order of dominance, by the principal's office (3.73), the superintendent's office (3.48), and the school board (3.28), as indicated in Table 4.12. Consistent with the March study, teachers (2.58) and the provincial education department (1.95) were perceived to have the least control over most decisions.

Although March (1981) had predicted some loss of control by the school board and the education department, there was some evidence in this study that the overall perceived degree of actual control by the school board (3.28) had declined, but the provincial education department's control (1.95) had increased, as indicated in Table 4.12.

In recent years, the scarcity of resources and provincial initiatives may well have contributed in part to the declining control of the school board and the increasing control of the provincial education department. For instance, one of the objectives of the Management and Finance Plan (Program Policy Manual, 1984:1) implemented by Alberta Education was "increased efficiency and effectiveness in the use of limited public funds for the provision of education with the focus on providing benefits directly to students." The results of this study suggest that the Management and Finance Plan (1984) had a major impact on control over educational decisions. It may have increased local control over operational decisions, but also increased provincial control over strategic policy decisions.

In this study, the relative positions of the superintendent's office and the principal's office were markedly different compared to the March findings, which indicated that the superintendent's office and the principal's office had a relatively equivalent degree of control. With respect to the decrease in control by the superintendent's office relative to that of the principal's office, the reasons cited above to explain the increase in control by the principal's office might also explain in part a possible decline in control by the superintendent's office. In other words, the increase in control by the principal's office may have occurred to some extent at the expense of the superintendent's office.

Other major findings of this study also indicated that the perceived loci of actual control over educational decisions were largely similar to the loci of preferred control. March (1981) did not address this issue in his study.

Relationship of background characteristics. Of the nine background variables examined, position and school district were moderately related to perceptions regarding control over educational decisions and perceptions of the degree of centralizing and decentralizing influence of selected factors. Gender, formal education, age and number of years in a position were mildly related to perceptions of control over educational decisions and the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors. Years of administrative experience, type of school and size of school were very weakly related, although the type of school was moderately related to perceptions of centralizing or decentralizing influence. However, these findings might have been affected to some extent by the interaction among interrelated variables.

Of particular interest, formal education was moderately related to perceptions of the degree of control over educational decisions and the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors. These findings suggest that an administrator's perceptions of control over educational decisions are not likely to change with increasing years of administrative experience, but they might well be influenced by a change in position, school district, formal education, age or number of years in a position.

Influence of selected factors. This study determined that education department policy and provincial legislation were perceived to have a moderate centralizing influence over educational decisions. In addition, five variables contributed a mild centralizing influence: pressure from the teachers' association, pressure for public accountability, current political climate, pressure from the trustees' association and the current economic climate.

The March study (1981), however, indicated that education department policy had very little influence during the period of 1975-1980 but predicted greater influence for 1980-1985. It did not examine the influence of provincial legislation. The results of this study were similar to those of the March study with respect to the influence of pressure for public accountability and the political and economic climates, all of which were predicted to increase, according to the March findings.

The results of this study were different from those of the March study with respect to social climate, teacher pressure, board policy, trustee pressure and administrative practice. March found that the foregoing factors tended to exert a mild decentralizing influence, but were predicted to decrease. According to this study, trustee and teacher pressure contributed a mild centralizing influence, while board policy and administrative practice were perceived to have little or no influence. Scarcity of resources during the five-year period (1980-1985) may account in large measure for the differences in the findings compared to the March study relative to the foregoing factors.

However, the results of this study supported the March findings with respect to the mild decentralizing influence of personal philosophy. This finding suggests that regardless of changing political, social or economic conditions, personal philosophy tends to have a decentralizing influence on control over educational decisions. In general, decentralization of control may be perceived as a desirable goal from a personal point of view. Other variables examined in this study, which were not investigated by March, were perceived to have little or no influence (moral and ethical standards, multiculturalism policy, pressure for human rights and pressure for minority rights).

C. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE, RESEARCH AND THEORY

This section discusses implications which were drawn from the findings of this study and the related literature. First, the implications for current practice are discussed, followed by the implications for research and theory.

Current Practice

Leadership of the principal's office. The high degree of perceived control by the principal's office suggests that the role of the principal might well be changing. It would appear that new opportunities may exist for a principal to exercise leadership in an educational system. In reviewing the effective-schools movement, Sackney (1986:15) suggested that "bottom-up, school-specific change efforts" require a participatory or democratic approach that involves a high degree of staff collaboration, group planning, and shared decision making. Principals may enhance school effectiveness by increasing the participation of teachers, parents and other stakeholder groups in the process of decision making.

Still, numerous questions about the high degree of control by the principal's office over educational decisions at the operational level might be raised in connection with this study. For example, is the shift in control still occurring? Will the principal's office become even more powerful? Is it desirable?

There was some evidence that control by the principal's office had exceeded preferred levels. For example, respondents felt that the principal's office had more control over finance and budgeting at the school level than was preferred. On the other hand, trustees and administrators felt that principals should have more control over capital expenditures and personnel management. The principal's control over some decision areas may well continue to increase, but it may be curtailed in others. There might also be a need for school districts to consider adopting new approaches to control over decisison areas to counteract inertia and maintain a proper balance. A high concentration of control at one organizational level may reduce the balance of control in the educational system, and increase resistance to change and innovation.

In view of the high degree of control by the principal's office over operational decisions, it is very important for school districts to consider ways to ensure that proper checks and balances exist. In this regard, there appears to be a need for exercising various means of greater control over principals to ensure a high degree of accountability. For example, attention might be given to re-examining criteria and procedures for the selection and evaluation of principals and implementing appropriate changes, including ongoing training programs.

Peterson (1984) identified six mechanisms of administrative control over managers in educational organizations, four of which were hierarchical, one social and one extraorganizational. The four hierarchical controls were supervision, input control (resources), behavior control (structuring of activities), and output control (monitoring and evaluation). The other two controls were selection-socialization (ongoing training) and environmental control (need for community support). The foregoing controls might be of some use in light of the principal's high degree of control over numerous decision areas, as shown by this study. Indeed, it may be increasingly important for school districts to ensure that principals work towards achieving school district objectives and that they are held accountable for their results. As a public enterprise, education is too important to be dominated by the control of one organizational level.

With respect to school-based staffing, the principal should respond appropriately to school district objectives, the needs of school programs and the needs of the community, while avoiding the temptation to make decisions on the basis of administrative or political expediency. For example, the selection and assignment of a teacher should be based primarily on the needs of the school instructional program rather than the needs of an extra-curricular program. In addition, school-based staffing requires a mechanism for the placement of teachers who have experienced some difficulties in a particular school situation and may need a change to a more appropriate assignment.

However, it is important for senior administrators to ensure that a principal has all the available information and appropriate supervisory and consultative assistance to make optimal and reasonable decisions with respect to staffing. Unless a school district gives high priority and close attention to the implementation of school-based staffing, of ensuring proper checks and balances, there may be a high potential for abuse.

Accordingly, there are times, though infrequently, when a principal's desire to make a decision might be curtailed in the best interests of the whole district. For example, the assignment of a teacher to a position appropriate to his or her qualifications and experience might well be a school system priority, not only important for the individual teacher, but vitally important for maintaining high teacher morale in the district or maintaining high instructional standards, even though such a decision might be contrary to principal preference. Similarly, under special circumstances, such as the implementation of new programs, upholding school district priorities might well be more important than maintaining principal autonomy in a particular case or decision area.

Decentralization of control. What are the consequences of high decentralization of control? For instance, are teachers expected to assume a greater role in school-based decision making? What is the effect, if any, on student learning or parental involvement? What are the implications for support services? What kind of monitoring and evaluation might be required? What unintended consequences might result?

If a principal is wise in judiciously using the powers of office, he or she will actively seek the advice and guidance of all stakeholder groups. Of critical importance, the literature supports the participation of teachers in the decision-making process, whenever it is desirable (Hoy & Sousa, 1984; Owens, 1981; Scott, 1981). Yet the results of this study offer some support to the view of Meyer and Rowan (1983) that teacher professionalism (autonomy) is largely a myth, except in matters pertaining to the classroom.

However, it may not be desirable to mandate or impose a participatory style on principals, as some principals might well be very effective in using other styles of leader behavior. Yet principals might be encouraged to share their power with stakeholder groups and to provide teachers with opportunities to participate in decision making, whenever it is desirable. If teachers fail to use their powers wisely, however, a principal might rely on community influence and support as an effective counterbalance. For example, support from a parent advisory committee may effectively overcome teacher resistance to a school program change.

Role of the school board. What are the implications for the school board regarding the high degree of power, authority and influence vested in the principal's office? Does greater decentralization of control at the professional or managerial level mean a loss of status and importance to the board of trustees? Has the role of the trustee changed as a result? How has the relationship of the trustee changed with respect to the superintendent, the principal, the teacher or the ratepayer?

In view of the high degree of control by the principal's office, perhaps the least desirable consequence would be the abdication by the board of trustees of its duties and responsibilites. As the elected body responsible for policy making, fiscal, and budgetary approval, the school board serves as the final authority at the local level on all school matters. It must ensure that all school district services are provided on a fair and equitable basis to all groups and individuals within the district.

Accordingly, school boards might adopt various methods for keeping principals on a course of action established by board policy. One of the means might be to shape and encourage community expectations of the school. In this connection, overriding board policies should give direction to the whole district and provide a framework for principals to work within. Such policies should direct the principal to be proactive in seeking and maintaining community support. Most important, appropriate mechanisms and communication networks need to be developed within the school community. Adequate monitoring and follow-up needs to be carried out by principals and central office administrators, if accountability to the school board and the community is to be met.

On balance, it would seem important for trustees to be wary of getting too closely involved with administrative or operational matters yet to recognize and accept the need to get involved on matters of grievance or appeal requiring political decisions. In this regard, it is important to define the general spheres of influence or powers of trustees and administrators. Overall, the increase in control by the principal's office need not be granted at the expense of the school board. Perhaps the real danger is the perception on either side that a gain on the one hand means a loss of power on the other.

Role of the superintendent. What are the implications for the role of the superintendent? What changes in leader behavior or management style on the part of the superintendent might be desirable? How might policy making and decision making be improved? How might communication be affected?

The decentralization of control to the school level has major implications for the role of the superintendent. First, the superintendent's office might serve as an effective link or bridge between school programs and the school board. It might facilitate worthwhile communication and gather appropriate information. Second, it might ensure that appropriate mechanisms exist for policy making, decision making and policy implementation. Third, superintendents need to carefully consider how their leader behavior or management style might enhance or impede organizational effectiveness. Fourth, superintendents need to consider how accountability might be built into various levels of the total system. Most important, the foregoing might differ from past or present practices in the degree to which active participation, support and influence is sought from the community.

In discussing organizational leadership from the perspective of the superintendent, Pitner and Ogawa (1981) found that the superintendent's work largely involved two broad areas of activity: communicating and exerting an organizational influence within the constraints of social and organizational structures. They also challenged conventional views of leadership and reported that broad contextual influences, societal and extraorganizational factors, have a major impact on superintendent performance. Such factors define the "docile" dimensions of leadership (Pitner & Ogawa, 1981:62).

In view of the decentralization of control to the school level, and the superintendent's high degree of control over several decision categories, a number of questions are pertinent. For example, what are the implications for personnel management and staff development? How might expenditures, finance and budgeting be affected? What are the implications for organizational structure and the role of central office support services? How has the relationship between the principal's office and the superintendent's office changed?

At a practical level, it might well be that the superintendent's office may have to break with traditional decision-making approaches. For instance, it might rely less on hierarchical authority and adopt various models (joint or shared decision making, consensus, collegial model, delegation of authority) to facilitate decision-making processes, even in a time of considerable organizational uncertainty and scarcity of resources. This course of action is consistent with the views of Thompson (1967) and Hasenfeld (1983), who argued that educational organizations operate with less emphasis on formal hierarchy than other organizations. It would also be consistent with higher expectations for participation in educational decision making (Cox & Wood, 1980; Hoy & Miskel, 1978).

Today, it seems likely that the failure of the superintendent's office to meet the challenge of implementing democratic and participatory approaches to school decision making might indeed have very serious consequences for a school district.

Related Research Studies

Finally, this study needs to be placed in perspective, within the context of other research studies. Previous related studies generally gathered data from one or two groups of role partners (that is, mutual role senders), often teachers and principals (Chamberlain, 1975; Chung, 1985; Louden, 1980; March, 1981; Simpkins, 1968). However, this study focused on three categories of key participants in educational decision making: trustees, senior administrators and principals. In this respect, the study had a fairly wide scope, yet maintained a balanced focus.

The analyses conducted in this study confirmed to some extent the degree of consensus that was evident among the three groups of role partners. For instance, the findings indicated that the position of the incumbent within the organization (role position) was a major variable affecting perceptions of control (actual and preferred) over educational decisions and the degree of centralizing or decentralizing influence of selected factors. In light of these findings, it might be reasonable to assume that research studies of this nature gain credibility and greater validity by gathering data from several groups of key informants (preferably role partners), rather than relying only on data acquired from one or two groups. If one of the groups had been left out of this study, some of the findings likely would have been significantly different, not to mention the effect on their generalizability.

This study raised important questions about the perceptions of control over educational decisions. In general, it revealed similar patterns of the perceived actual and preferred control over educational decisions. Most important, it indicated a high degree of control by the principal's office and, to a lesser extent, increasing control by the provincial education department on some decisions. Although a shift in control was predicted in part by previous studies (Chung, 1985; March, 1981), the extent of decentralization and its consequences were largely based on speculation. This study attempted to address these issues and refined some of the questions which were raised by previous researchers.

Chung (1985:iv), for example, found that "hierarchical control was perceived to be pervasive in matters outside classroom management." Consistent with Chung's findings, this study confirmed that control over operational decisions was perceived to be highly concentrated in the principal's office in terms of scope and degree.

Furthermore, this study explored the significance of numerous background variables related to perceptions of control over educational decisions. To date, only limited investigation along this line of inquiry has apparently been carried out with respect to school district personnel. Yet knowledge about the significance of personal and organizational variables may lead to improvements in the decision-making process.

In perspective, this research study, although a survey, shed some light on fundamental questions concerning power, authority and influence over educational decisions in large, urban school districts in Alberta.

Theoretical Implications

Major theoretical implications are evident, whenever decentralization of power, authority and influence occurs at varying organizational levels. The literature indicated that shifts of power, authority and influence occur among educational organizations and within various organizational levels (Firestone & Herriott, 1982; Scott, 1981; Willower, 1980).

Set in the context of previous studies, this study tends to support the view that control over educational decisions is not static but fluid and dynamic, varying across organizational levels and changing from time to time. However, there was only minor evidence of significant differences between perceptions of the actual and preferred control over educational decisions. These findings suggest, therefore, that changes in control over educational decisions occur incrementally.

There was considerable support for an open systems theory of control, since perceptions of control over educational decisions were affected by both intra- and extra-organizational dimensions. For example, position was strongly related to perceptions of control in the context of formal social-organizational life. Perceptions of control were also found to be related to organizational structures and processes and extraorganizational constraints (laws, regulations and policies).

In conclusion, there are promising new theoretical explanations of educational decision making (Bacharach, 1981; Meyer & Rowan, 1983; Owens, 1981; Weick, 1976;). Overall, the findings of this study appear to be fairly consistent with much of the recent theoretical and research literature, which suggests that educational decision making is highly complex, multi-dimensional and uniquely characteristic of human service organizations. In practice, finding an appropriate balance of control over educational decisions is a major challenge for any society.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study attempted to build on previous research to investigate perceptions of trustees and administrators regarding control over educational decisions. The analyses determined the perceived degree of actual and preferred control over educational decisions and the influence of selected factors. Since this study was descriptive in nature, further research is recommended to investigate other aspects of control over educational decisions.

Further research is suggested in the following areas:

1. Similar studies of control over educational decisions as perceived by trustees and administrators of small, urban school boards and rural school jurisdictions might be useful to test the generalizability of the findings from this study.

2. A survey of parental involvement in educational policy making and decision making might determine to what degree decentralization of control at the school level has actually reached the community.

3. An investigation of the impact of the Management and Finance Plan of Alberta Education on control over educational decisions might be useful to determine what changes have occurred with respect to provincial and local control. Related studies could also focus on the issue of financial equity, particularly to determine to what extent equity has been maintained and to disclose possible inequities among school jurisdictions in Alberta. Furthermore, studies might be undertaken to assess the outcomes and to reveal possible unintended consequences of the Management and Finance Plan.

4. Case studies of the process of educational policy development and policy implementation in urban and rural school jurisdictions might be useful for determining to what extent the Management and Finance Plan has succeeded in its aim of reshaping the educational policy-development process in Alberta.

5. Studies of the impact of varying leader behavior or management style on organizational effectiveness might be timely. Numerous changes have occurred in education in Alberta recently so that studies of this nature would have merit, if they were to consider recommendations for practice.

In addition, further investigation might be undertaken to verify key relationships between variables suggested by this study and earlier studies (Chamberlain, 1975; Chung, 1985; Louden, 1980; March, 1981; Simpkins, 1968). In a global sense, this study and earlier ones provide a data base or "critical mass" large enough for supporting generalizations or propositions. The writer suggests that their verification may lead to the development of substantive theory.

Two other reasons might be advanced for presenting propositions relating to this study. First, propositions might provide a focus or guide for further research. Second, propositions might serve as a guide to action for elected and appointed officials. If research is to be of any benefit, it should contribute to the knowledge base which an administrator or trustee might turn to for some assistance or perhaps inspiration.

The following propositions were developed from the findings of this study, in the context of related studies. The propositions pertain to the influence of background characteristics on perceptions of control, and centralizing or decentralizing factors.

> Proposition 1: Individual perceptions of control over educational decisions are related to role position within an organization.
>
> Proposition 2: Individual perceptions of control over educational decisions are influenced by organizational structures and processes.

Proposition 3: Individual perceptions of control over educational decisions are influenced by extraorganizational constraints (laws, regulations and policies).

Proposition 4: Individual perceptions of centralizing or decentralizing influence are related to role position within an organization.

Proposition 5: Individual perceptions of centralizing or decentralizing influence are influenced by organizational structures and processes.

Proposition 6: Individual perceptions of centralizing or decentralizing influence are influenced by extraorganizational constraints (laws, regulations and policies).

Proposition 7: Principal perceptions of centralizing or decentralizing influence are affected by the type of school.

Concluding Statement

The results of this study, while contributing to the ongoing research on control over educational decisions, indicated that trustees and administrators preferred some changes to the status quo in some decision areas. For example, trustees and administrators felt that the principal's office should have more control over capital expenditures and personnel management, but less control over finance and budgeting. They also felt that teachers should have more control over four decision areas: personnel management, student management, community relations, and policy making and decision making. However, they perceived that the provincial education department should have less control over finance and budgeting, capital expenditures, and equipment, supplies and services.

Most important, this study revealed that a status-quo orientation towards control over educational decisions prevailed in four large, urban school districts in Alberta. Overall, respondents were satisfied with control over educational decisions and preferred few changes.

However, there should be no place for complacency in today's world. This study suggests that educational organizations may need to closely monitor and assess decision-making structures and processes in view of their dynamic and political nature. There may well be dangers in allowing a high concentration of control to be exercised at one organizational level. Finding a proper balance of control and making constant adjustments where necessary should be matters of high priority for any organization serving the public good.

Without question, power, authority and influence in the public sphere should always be exercised with appropriate discretion and should be subjected to close scrutiny in any civilized society.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE A

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA APRIL, 1985

QUESTIONNAIRE A CONTROL OVER EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

PART A INSTRUCTIONS

The following items require decision making within educational organizations: the school, school district or provincial department of education.

Read each item carefully and CIRCLE the number of the group(s) which, according to your perception, is/are currently exercising MAJOR control over the decision item.

For the purpose of this study, control over educational decisions refers to the power, authority and influence required to make an actual decision.

EXAMPLE:

	CODE:	Teachers	Principal's Office	Superintendent's Off.	School Board	Provincial Education Department
Deciding the minimum age at which children may begin school.	IS	1	2	3	4	[✓ 5]

In this example, deciding the minimum school starting age IS currently made by the Provincial Education Department.

CIRCLE only the number of the group(s) which, in your judgment, currently exercise(s) MAJOR control. DECISION ITEM:	CODE:	Teachers	Principal's Office	Superintendent's Office	School Board	Provincial Education Department	1 Office Use Only
1. Deciding on major equipment items for a particular school.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	6-10
2. Deciding to include special features (music, room, lunch room) in school buildings.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	11-15
3. Deciding on school philosophy.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	16-20
4. Deciding on methods to raise additional funds for a particular school.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	21-25
5. Deciding on school discipline procedures.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	26-30

		Teachers	Principal's Office	Superintendent's Office	School Board	Provincial Education Department	
6. Deciding on the timetable or lesson schedule for a school.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	31-35
7. Deciding to implement a language program (immersion, bilingual).	IS	1	2	3	4	5	36-40
8. Deciding the allocation of funds to a school from a school district.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	41-45
9. Deciding on school-district policies.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	46-50
10. Deciding on classroom furnishings.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	51-55
11. Deciding on the textbooks to be used in a subject area.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	56-60
12. Deciding on procedures for assessing student progress.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	61-65
13. Deciding on the use of a school building by community groups.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	66-70
14. Deciding the minimum and maximum class sizes in a school.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	71-75
15. Deciding the minimum and maximum instructional times for subject areas.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	76-80
16. Deciding to close a school.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	-----2 6-10
17. Deciding on the extent of teacher participation in school decision making.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	11-15
18. Deciding on the final grades or marks in a subject area.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	16-20
19. Deciding on policies for evaluating instructional programs.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	21-25
20. Deciding if a pilot project of an instructional program should be approved as an ongoing school program.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	26-30
21. Deciding on the exact number of teachers required by a school.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	31-35
22. Deciding to implement a special education program for handicapped students.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	36-40

		Teachers	Principal's Office	Superintendent's Office	School Board	Provincial Education Department	
23. Deciding the distribution of expenditures within a school.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	41-45
24. Deciding to make additions to school buildings.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	46-50
25. Deciding on instructional methods in the classroom.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	51-55
26. Deciding to release to the public details of school achievement test results.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	56-60
27. Deciding on selecting a principal for a school.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	61-65
28. Deciding on how to involve parents in school activities.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	66-70
29. Deciding on procedures for reporting student progress.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	71-75
30. Deciding to establish special schools for handicapped children.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	76-80
							----3
31. Deciding on teacher evaluation procedures.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	6-10
32. Deciding on regular transportation services for students.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	11-15
33. Deciding to allocate funds to a new instructional program.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	16-20
34. Deciding to establish a parent advisory committee at a school.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	21-25
35. Deciding if a pilot project of an instructional program should be implemented.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	26-30
36. Deciding on specific policies at the school level.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	31-35
37. Deciding on selecting a teacher for a school.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	36-40
38. Deciding on teaching assignments at a school (grade, subject areas).	IS	1	2	3	4	5	41-45
39. Deciding on the content of the curriculum for a subject area.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	46-50
40. Deciding on standards for student conduct.	IS	1	2	3	4	5	51-55

PART B INSTRUCTIONS

A system becomes more decentralized if control over decisions moves in the direction as follows: Province →District →School →Classroom (Policy Maker →Administrator → Practitioner). However, a system becomes more centralized if control over decision making moves in the opposite direction.

Please CIRCLE the most appropriate response (number) to indicate, in your judgment, the degree of decentralizing or centralizing influence being exerted currently in Alberta by various factors.

CODE:

EXAMPLE:	strong decentralization	moderate decent.	mild decent.	balanced forces	mild centralization	moderate cent.	strong centralization
Federal Government Influence	1	2	3	[✓ 4]	5	6	7

This example indicates the federal government influence is neither decentralizing nor centralizing (of no significance).

CODE:

CIRCLE one number in each of the following scales to indicate the degree of decentralizing or centralizing influence of each factor.

FACTOR:	strong decentralization	moderate decent.	mild decent.	balanced forces	mild centralization	moderate cent.	strong centralization	
41. Education Department Policy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	56
42. Current Practices in Administration	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	57
43. Pressure from Teachers' Association	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	58
44. Provincial Legislation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	59
45. Pressure for Public Accountability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	60
46. Current Political Climate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	61
47. Pressure from Trustees' Association	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	62
48. Current Economic Climate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	63
49. Multiculturalism Policy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	64
50. Pressure for Minority Rights	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	65
51. Pressure from Science and Technology	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	66
52. School Board Policy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	67
53. Social and Cultural Mores	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	68
54. Your Own Personal Philosophy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	69
55. Pressure for Human Rights	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	70
56. Moral and Ethical Standards	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	71

57. List any other decentralizing factors which you consider important, but were not included in the above:

____

____

____

58. List any other centralizing factors which you consider important, but were not included in the above:

____

____

____

PART C DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

INSTRUCTIONS

Please CIRCLE the appropriate response (number) or fill in the blank.

59. Your Position: 72

1. central office administrator
2. principal
3. trustee

60. Your Sex: 73

1. female
2. male

61. Your Age: 74

1. 21-30
2. 31-40
3. 41-50
4. 51-60
5. 61-70
6. 71-up

62. Years in Present Position (include this school year but do not count the years in another school district or another school): 75-76

______________________.

63. Formal Education: 77

1. Less than Bachelor's Degree
2. Bachelor's Degree
3. Master's Degree
4. Doctorate

TRUSTEES ONLY MAY STOP AT THIS POINT.

64. FOR CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS AND PRINCIPALS ONLY.

Total years of administrative experience (include this school year and count the years in another school district or another school): 78-79

__________________.

65. FOR PRINCIPALS ONLY.

Type of School: 80

1. Elementary
2. Junior High
3. Senior High
4. Elementary-Junior High

66. FOR PRINCIPALS ONLY.

-----4
6

Enrolment of School:

1. 1-200
2. 201-300
3. 301-400
4. 401-500
5. 501-1000
6. 1001-1500
7. 1501-2000
8. 2001 and up

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE!

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE B

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA APRIL, 1985

QUESTIONNAIRE B CONTROL OVER EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

PART A INSTRUCTIONS

The following items require decision making within educational organizations: the school, school district or provincial department of education.

Read each item carefully and CIRCLE the number of the group(s) which, according to your perception, SHOULD exercise MAJOR control over the decision item.

For the purpose of this study, control over educational decisions refers to the power, authority and influence required to make an actual decision.

EXAMPLE:	CODE:	Teachers	Principal's Office	Superintendent's Office	School Board	Provincial Education Department
Deciding the minimum age at which children may begin school	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	[✓ 5]

In this example, deciding the minimum school starting age SHOULD be made by the Provincial Education Department.

CIRCLE only the number of the group(s) which, in your judgment, SHOULD exercise MAJOR control.

DECISION ITEM:	CODE:	Teachers	Principal's Office	Superintendent's Office	School Board	Provincial Education Department	1 ----- Office Use Only
1. Deciding on major equipment items for a particular school.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	6-10
2. Deciding to include special features (music room, lunch room) in school buildings.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	11-15
3. Deciding on school philosophy.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	16-20
4. Deciding on methods to raise additional funds for a particular school.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	21-25
5. Deciding on school discipline procedures.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	26-30

			Teachers	Principal's Office	Superintendent's Office	School Board	Provincial Education Department	
6.	Deciding on the timetable or lesson schedule for a school.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	31-35
7.	Deciding to implement a language program (immersion, bilingual).	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	36-40
8.	Deciding the allocation of funds to a school from a school district.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	41-45
9.	Deciding on school-district policies.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	46-50
10.	Deciding on classroom furnishings.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	51-55
11.	Deciding on the textbooks to be used in a subject area.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	56-60
12.	Deciding on procedures for assessing student progress.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	61-65
13.	Deciding on the use of a school building by community groups.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	66-70
14.	Deciding the minimum and maximum class sizes in a school.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	71-75
15.	Deciding the minimum and maximum instructional times for subject areas.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	76-80
								----2
16.	Deciding to close a school.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	6-10
17.	Deciding on the extent of teacher participation in school decision making.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	11-15
18.	Deciding on the final grades or marks in a subject area.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	16-20
19.	Deciding on policies for evaluating instructional programs.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	21-25
20.	Deciding if a pilot project of an instructional program should be approved as an ongoing school program.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	26-30
21.	Deciding on the exact number of teachers required by a school.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	31-35
22.	Deciding to implement a special education program for handicapped students.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	36-40

		Teachers	Principal's Office	Superintendent's Offic	School Board	Provincial Education Department	
23. Deciding the distribution of expenditures within a school	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	41-45
24. Deciding to make additions to school buildings.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	46-50
25. Deciding on instructional methods in the classroom	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	51-55
26. Deciding to release to the public details of school achievement test results.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	56-60
27. Deciding on selecting a principal for a school.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	61-65
28. Deciding on how to involve parents in school activities.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	66-70
29. Deciding on procedures for reporting student progress.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	71-75
30. Deciding to establish special schools for handicapped children.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	76-80
							----3
31. Deciding on teacher evaluation procedures.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	6-10
32. Deciding on regular transportation services for students.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	11-15
33. Deciding to allocate funds to a new instructional program.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	16-20
34. Deciding to establish a parent advisory committee at a school.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	21-25
35. Deciding if a pilot project of an instructional program should be implemented.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	26-30
36. Deciding on specific policies at the school level.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	31-35
37. Deciding on selecting a teacher for a school.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	36-40
38. Deciding on teaching assignments at a school (grade, subject areas).	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	41-45
39. Deciding on the content of the curriculum for a subject area.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	46-50
40. Deciding on standards for student conduct.	SHOULD	1	2	3	4	5	51-55

PART B INSTRUCTIONS

A system becomes more decentralized if control over decisions moves in the direction as follows: Province → District → School → Classroom (Policy Maker → Administrator → Practitioner). However, a system becomes more centralized if control over decision making moves in the opposite direction.

Please CIRCLE the most appropriate response (number) to indicate, in your judgment, the degree of decentralizing or centralizing influence being exerted currently in Alberta by various factors.

EXAMPLE:	CODE: strong decentralization	moderate decent.	mild decent.	balanced forces	mild centralization	moderate cent.	strong centralization
Federal Government Influence	1	2	3	[✓ 4]	5	6	7

This example indicates the federal government influence is neither decentralizing nor centralizing (of no significance).

CIRCLE one number in each of the following scales to indicate the degree of decentralizing or centralizing influence of each factor.

FACTOR:	CODE: strong decentralization	moderate decent.	mild decent.	balanced forces	mild centralization	moderate cent.	strong centralization	
41. Education Department Policy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	56
42. Current Practices in Administration	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	57
43. Pressure from Teachers' Association	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	58
44. Provincial Legislation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	59
45. Pressure for Public Accountability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	60
46. Current Political Climate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	61
47. Pressure from Trustees' Association	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	62
48. Current Economic Climate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	63
49. Multiculturalism Policy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	64
50. Pressure for Minority Rights	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	65
51. Pressure from Science and Technology	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	66
52. School Board Policy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	67
53. Social and Cultural Mores	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	68
54. Your Own Personal Philosophy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	69
55. Pressure for Human Rights	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	70
56. Moral and Ethical Standards	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	71

57. List any other decentralizing factors which you consider important, but were not included in the above:

58. List any other centralizing factors which you consider important, but were not included in the above:

PART C DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

INSTRUCTIONS

Please CIRCLE the appropriate response (number) or fill in the blank.

59. Your Position: 72

1. central office administrator
2. principal
3. trustee

60. Your Sex: 73

1. female
2. male

61. Your Age: 74

1. 21-30
2. 31-40
3. 41-50
4. 51-60
5. 61-70
6. 71-up

62. Years in Present Position (include this school year but do not count the years in another school district or another school): 75-76

______________________.

63. Formal Education: 77

1. Less than Bachelor's Degree
2. Bachelor's Degree
3. Master's Degree
4. Doctorate

TRUSTEES ONLY MAY STOP AT THIS POINT.

64. FOR CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS AND PRINCIPALS ONLY.

Total years of administrative experience (include this school year and count the years in another school district or another school): 78-79

______________.

65. FOR PRINCIPALS ONLY.

Type of School: 80

1. Elementary
2. Junior High
3. Senior High
4. Elementary-Junior High

66. FOR PRINCIPALS ONLY.

-----4

Enrolment of School:

6

1. 1-200
2. 201-300
3. 301-400
4. 401-500
5. 501-1000
6. 1001-1500
7. 1501-2000
8. 2001 and up

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE!

APPENDIX C

EXPERT OPINION RATING FORM

EXPERT OPINION RATINGS

PART A INSTRUCTIONS

Listed below are the 59 questionnaire items to which you have just responded. You are asked to perform the following tasks:

1. Below each item are two 8-point scales, one for rating the clarity of the item and another for rating the appropriateness of the item.

EXAMPLE:

A. The item is not ambiguous or obscure but is clear in its meaning.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 [✓ 8] CLEAR

B. The item is not irrelevant or unsuitable to the decision category but is appropriate .

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 [✓ 8] APPROPRIATE

2. In the space following each scale, please suggest a clearer version, if the item is unclear and/or suggest a more appropriate item, if the item is inappropriate in your judgment.

DECISION ITEM:

Finance and Budgeting

1. Deciding the allocation of funds to a school from a school district.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

2. Deciding the distribution of expenditures within a school.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

3. Deciding to allocate funds to a new instructional program.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

4. Deciding on methods to raise additional funds for a school.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

Capital Expenditures

5. Deciding to make additions to school buildings.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

6. Deciding to close a school.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

7. Deciding to include special features (music room, lunch room) in school buildings.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

8. Deciding to establish special schools for physically or mentally handicapped children.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

Equipment, Supplies and Services

9. Deciding on the text books to be used in a subject area.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

10. Deciding on transportation services for students.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

11. Deciding on major equipment items for a school.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

12. Deciding on classroom furnishings.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

Curriculum and Instruction

13. Deciding on instructional methods in the classroom.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

14. Deciding on the content of the curriculum for a subject area.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

15. Deciding on the final grades or marks in a subject area.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

16. Deciding on procedures for evaluating an instructional program.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

Personnel Management

17. Deciding on selecting a principal for a school.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

18. Deciding on the selection of new teaching staff.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

19. Deciding on teaching assignments at a school (grade, subject areas).

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

20. Deciding on teacher evaluation procedures.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

Student Management

21. Deciding on standards for student conduct.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

22. Deciding on procedures for assessing student progress in a school.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

23. Deciding on procedures for reporting student progress.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

24. Deciding on school discipline procedures.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

Organizational Structure

25. Deciding on the exact number of staff required by a school.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

26. Deciding on the timetable or lesson schedule for a school.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

27. Deciding the minimum and maximum instructional times for different subject areas.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

28. Deciding the minimum and maximum class sizes in a school.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

Community Relations

29. Deciding on how to involve parents in school activities (meetings, parent-teacher conferences).

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

30. Deciding on the use of a school building by community groups.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

31. Deciding to establish a parent advisory committee at a school.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

32. Deciding to release to the public details of school achievement test results.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

Implementation of New Programs

33. Deciding if a pilot project of an instructional program should be implemented.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

34. Deciding if a pilot project of an instructional program should be approved as an ongoing school program.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

35. Deciding to implement a language program (immersion, bilingual).

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

36. Deciding to implement a special education program (physically and mentally handicapped students).

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

Policy Making and Decision Making

37. Deciding on school-district policies.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

38. Deciding on school philosophy.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

39. Deciding on the extent of teacher participation in school decision making.

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

40. Deciding on school policies (professional development, field trips).

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

Part B INSTRUCTIONS- same as above

FACTOR:

41. Current Practice of Administration

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

---

42. Economic Climate
NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

43. Education Department Policy
NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

44. Morals and Ethics
NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

45. Multiculturalism
NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

46. Political Climate
NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

47. Provincial Legislature
NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

48. Public Accountability

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

49. School Board Policy

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

50. Science and Technology

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

51. Social Climate

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

52. Status of Women

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

53. Teachers' Association

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

54. Tolerance and Understanding

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

55. Trustees' Association

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

56, Your Own Personal Philosophy

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

57. Comment on any of the above factors which you consider important:

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

58. List any other decentralizing factors which you consider important, but were not included in the above:

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

59. List any other centralizing factors which you consider important, but were not included in the above:

NOT CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 CLEAR

NOT APPROPRIATE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 APPROPRIATE

60. Your general or specific comments about ways to improve the questionnaire (definitions, scales, format etc.) would be greatly appreciated:

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX D

COVERING LETTER

University of Alberta
Edmonton
Canada T6G 2G5

Department of Educational Administration
Faculty of Education
7-104 Education Building North, Telephone (403) 432-5241

April 22, 1985

Dear

I have been granted permission by your Superintendent's Office to undertake a research project on educational decision making. The study will serve to meet the requirements of a doctoral program in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta. In this regard, I am enclosing a questionnaire on educational decision making developed in consultation with my supervisor, Dr. A.G. Konrad. The questionnaire may be completed and returned in the enclosed, stamped and self-addressed envelope any time prior to May 1, 1985.

Trustees, superintendents and principals in the Calgary and Edmonton school districts were selected for the study because all three groups are considered to be in key positions to identify control over educational decisions. Realizing that there are many demands on the time of trustees and administrators, I have designed the questionnaire so that it may be completed in about 20 to 35 minutes. With your cooperation, my research study may contribute to a better understanding of educational decision making in the Province of Alberta.

I can assure you that complete confidentiality will be maintained and that the data will be portrayed only in summary form. The code number on the questionnaire allows me to conduct a follow up, if necessary.

I will be pleased to forward a summary of the findings to your school district, once the study has been completed.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Eugene Ewanyshyn

Enc.

APPENDIX E

REMINDER LETTER

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2G5

May 17, 1985

Dear

Re: Questionnaire- Control over Educational Decisions

Last May 6, 1985 I sent out questionnaires concerning a research project on educational decision making. To date, many questionnaires have already been returned.

If you have returned the qestionnaire I sent you, please accept my thanks and disregard this letter. If you did not receive a questionnaire, please advise me at 432-4909, so that I may forward another copy to you.

However, if you received the questionnaire, but have not completed it, I would be very grateful if you could find some time from your hectic schedule to do so, as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Eugene L. Ewanyshyn

APPENDIX F

COMPARISON OF SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Distribution of the Position of Respondents by Gender

Position	Female N	Female %	Male N	Male %	Total N	Total %
Trustees	14	9.2	12	7.9	26	17.1
Central Office Administrators	5	3.3	61	40.1	66	43.4
Principals	4	2.6	56	36.8	60	39.5
	23	15.1	129	84.9	152	100.0

Distribution of the Position of Respondents by Years in Present Position

Position	1 or 2		3 or 4		5 or 6		7 or more		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Trustees	11	7.3			7	4.7	7	4.7	25	16.7
Central Office Administrators	10	6.7	25	16.7	13	8.7	17	11.3	65	43.3
Principals	11	7.3	14	9.3	18	12.0	17	11.3	60	40.0
	32	21.3	39	26.0	38	25.3	41	27.3	150	100.0

Distribution of the Position of Respondents by Formal Education

Position	Bachelor's or Less N	%	Master's or More N	%	Total N	%
Trustees	21	13.9	5	3.3	26	17.2
Central Office Administrators	14	9.3	51	33.8	65	43.0
Principals	14	9.3	46	30.5	60	39.7
	49	32.5	102	67.5	151	100.0

Distribution of the Gender of Respondents by Formal Education

Position	Bachelor's or Less N	%	Master's or More N	%	Total N	%
Female	15	9.9	8	5.3	23	15.2
Male	34	22.5	94	62.3	128	84.8
	49	32.5	102	67.5	151	100.0

Distribution of the Age of Respondents by Years of Administrative Experience

Age	1 - 12		13 - 16		17 - 20		21+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
31-40	12	9.6							12	9.6
41-50	17	13.6	24	19.2	21	16.8	4	3.2	66	52.8
51+	7	5.6	9	7.2	9	7.2	22	17.6	47	37.6
	36	28.8	33	26.4	30	24.0	26	20.8	125	100.0

Distribution of Enrolment
by Type of School

Enrolment	Elem.		Jr.High		El.Jr.H.		Sr.High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Up to 200	2	3.3	1	1.7	1	1.7		
201 to 300	3	5.0	4	6.7	2	3.3		
301 to 400	5	8.3	3	5.0	4	6.7	1	1.7
401 to 500	2	3.3	2	3.3	5	8.3		
501 to 1000	1	1.7	5	8.3	4	6.7	4	6.7
1001 to 1500							4	6.7
1501 to 2000							6	10.0
2001 +							1	1.7
Total	13	21.6	15	25.0	16	26.7	16	26.8